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EMBRACING AUTUMN'S RICH COLOUR PALETTE



How quickly the seasons change. No sooner has the warm flush of summer died down than the chilly nip of autumn is catching us all unawares. The plein air painting kit is being packed away for another year (apart from a few hardy folk) and we're getting ready to close the studio doors behind us.

With this in mind, we're in a quieter and more contemplative mood this month. It's most obvious in Brazilian painter Fábio Cembranelli's gorgeous watercolours of the British countryside, made as part of his jetset world tour of workshops, and in the rich palette of artist Gareth Brown's paintings of fallen leaves and dried grasses. In keeping with that spirit, I hope you enjoy our profile of the brilliant and sometimes overlooked Gwen John, whose solemn portraits and quiet interior scenes deserve recognition among the finest British paintings of the 20th century.

As the weather turns, let's channel something of Gwen John's spirit and take this opportunity to celebrate the simple things in life: painting a subject you have overlooked until now or enjoying the satisfaction of getting a colour mix just so.

Steve Pill, Editor

Get in touch!

Spent the summer painting?
Share photos of your latest
masterpieces with us here...



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YOUR LETTERS...

LETTER OF THE MONTH

FANCY A PINTAR?

Having first heard about *Pintar Rapido* through your magazine I was delighted to hear that the event was coming to Glasgow. Not being accustomed to painting outside, I admit feeling out of my depth but needed to get out of my comfort zone so I signed up. I needn't have worried. Highly organised, very friendly and involving artists of all levels, the weekend was as much fun as I'd hoped.

The weather, the pressure of time constraints, the interested tourists and the challenge of framing a wet oil painting all added to the buzz. I didn't expect to win and my work didn't sell but I'll certainly enter again. I would encourage anyone to get involved in *Pintar Rapido* next year, whether as an artist, volunteer or as a buyer – I'd really like more of those! Thank you for being a constant source of inspiration.

Wilma Smith, via email

ENDING THE DROUGHT

RE: Letter of the Month, Issue 355

With regards to Steve Fox's curiosity about how others cope with inspiration drought, I have some thoughts that may help.

Creating artwork takes focus, energy and motivation. There is nothing wrong with taking breaks until one feels replenished enough to start a new painting or project.

Making art also requires a period of being receptive. When one is not creating, one can fill up by doing other productive things or even just relax. Thought of in this way, the periods of 'drought' can be constructive and positive.

Eszter Rajna, via email

MORE OF YOUR STUDIOS

My studio is a corner of the spare bedroom [below]. I like to set up my folding table (bought for £5 from Woolworths many years ago) with the window on my left so that the shadows are always on the right. I paint only in the afternoon so that the sun does not interfere with my compositions, mainly flowers, fruit or vegetables in a botanical style.

I used to wish for a proper studio because, as Virginia Woolf wrote, every woman should have "a room of her own". It would save having to set up every day, but



write to us

Send your letter or email to the addresses below:

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Your Letters
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The writer of our 'letter of the month' will receive a £50 gift voucher from our partner GreatArt, who offers the UK's largest range of art materials with over 50,000 art supplies and regular discounts and promotions.

www.greatart.co.uk



over the years this has become less of a chore – the painting is paramount.

Jean Wood, Swanland, East Riding of Yorkshire

I have lived in Mauritius now for the last four years. I make my living there as a portrait artist and have a studio in my garden looking out to the Indian Ocean [above].

I have a separate detached house with a guest suite on the ground floor that I am considering letting out to artists to come and work, especially in the cold UK winter when the weather here is hot and the light is magnificent. There is a hot tub and there are gates in the garden leading to a small beach, as well as a fabulous double Indian swing seat positioned to look out to the most fantastic sunsets.

I will only be renting to artists as not only do I think they would appreciate the facilities, but I would also enjoy meeting other UK artists.

Lynn Smith, via email

I'm not so posh. My work area is a corner of our lounge. I made the table myself and it's sufficient for my needs. I usually paint from 3pm to 8pm, if I'm not working.

Bill Hargreaves, Bury, Lancashire

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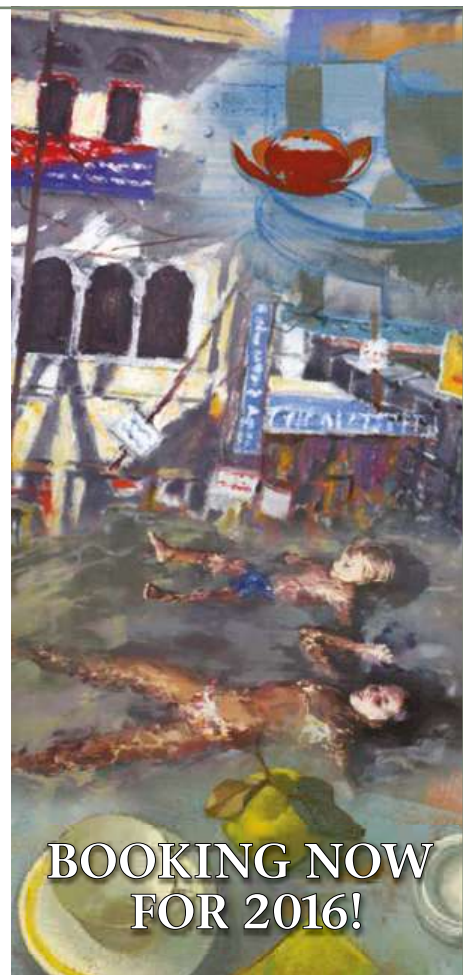
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J.M.W Turner (1775 - 1851) *The Great Falls of the Reichenbach*, 1804, courtesy of the Trustees of Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

9 ARTISTIC THINGS TO DO IN

OCTOBER



1

THE BIG DRAW

Now stretching as far afield as India, Australia and the US, the Campaign for Drawing's 16th annual showcase can officially lay claim to being the world's biggest drawing festival. This year's theme is 'Every Drawing Tells A Story' (as Children's Laureate Chris Riddell's brilliant sketch demonstrates above) and many of the 1,800 events taking place across the UK from 1-31 October will be tapping into this for inspiration. On 17 October, Penrith Library in Cumbria invites artists to create their own books using drawing and collage techniques, while on 28 October, artist Catrin Williams hosts a self-portrait workshop at Galeri in Caernarfon. Visit The Big Draw's website to find out more about the campaign for visual literacy and discover events near you on the interactive map.

www.thebigdraw.org



2

LISTEN Kurt Jackson

The popular Cornish painter launches his new *Place* exhibition at Bath's Victoria Art Gallery with an hour-long talk on the opening day (10 October, 11.30am). Find out more about his semi-abstract techniques and unusual choice of subject matter.
www.victoriagal.org.uk

3

Prud'hon: The Moving Body
Two life-drawing events with a twist at London's Dulwich Picture Gallery (16 and 17 October). Inspired by its *Prud'hon: Napoleon's Draughtsman* exhibition, human 'sculptures' will come to life and embark on a dance while you sketch, drink and enjoy.
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

4

PAINT Paint Out Norwich

Up to 50 selected artists can take part in this five-day plein air painting festival (19-23 October). Events include a mass 'paint out' from Mousehold Heath, nocturne sessions and a gala auction. Deadline for entries is 30 September.
www.paintoutnorwich.org



5

DISCOVER Newport Street Gallery

Shark-pickling charlatan Damien Hirst opens his own gallery in south London this month. Opening on the 8 October, the inaugural show at the new 3,400m² venue is *Power Stations*, a display of paintings by the late British abstract artist John Hoyland (below).
www.newportstreetgallery.com



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6

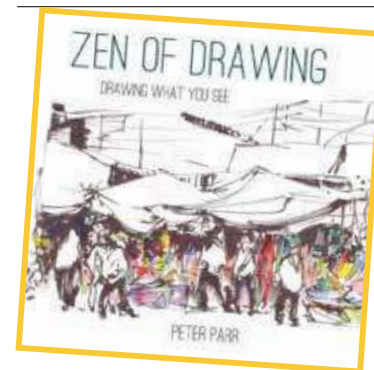
STUDY Adventures in Drawing

This eight-week course (8 October to 26 November) at the University of Liverpool is lead by Paul Gatenby, the founder of the city's Urban Sketchers group. Meeting every Thursday, beginners and professionals alike can develop their own drawing language through mark-making methods.
www.liv.ac.uk

7

VISIT Manchester Artists' Book Fair

Now in its tenth year, this two-day event (16-17 October) at Manchester School of Art's Holden Gallery invites artists and boutique publishers from across the northwest to show their printed wares.
www.manchesterartistsbookfair.com



8

READ Zen of Drawing

Animation professor Peter Parr encourages a more emotional response to your subjects via this inspiring little book (£14.99, Batsford). New mark-making techniques are explored in detail and a vast range of materials are utilised, from quill pens to iPads.
www.pavilionbooks.com

9

WATCH The Story of Scottish Art Big Painting Challenge

judge Lachlan Goudie's new four-part series explores 5,000 years of Scottish art from Neolithic sculpture to the Glasgow Boys. The first episode airs on BBC Two Scotland on 6 October and will be available on BBC iPlayer across the UK then too.
www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer





The Sketch Book Tour of Japan

Autumn in Japan

with award winning contemporary watercolour & acrylics artist **Craig Penny**

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6 - 17 November 2017 Bookings open

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EXHIBITIONS

OCTOBER'S BEST ART SHOWS

ENGLAND - LONDON

Drawing in Silver and Gold

Until 6 December

Metalpoint works from Leonardo to Jasper Johns.
British Museum. www.britishmuseum.org

Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat

17 September to 17 January 2016

Fascinating lesson in colour, previewed last month.
Courtauld Gallery. www.courtauld.ac.uk

The Fallen Woman

25 September to 3 January 2016

Powerful display of Pre-Raphaelite portraits.
Foundling Museum. www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

Goya: The Portraits

7 October to 10 January 2016

Landmark display of the Spanish court painter.
National Gallery. www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Giacometti: Pure Presence

15 October to 10 January 2016

Career-spanning display of the sculptor's portraits.
National Portrait Gallery. www.npg.org.uk

Jean-Etienne Liotard

24 October to 31 January 2016

Swiss portraits from the Enlightenment.
Royal Academy of Arts. www.royalacademy.org.uk

Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World

Until 25 October

Last chance to see this exhaustive retrospective.
Tate Britain. www.tate.org.uk

The World Goes Pop

17 September to 24 January 2016

Global responses to Warhol and co.

Tate Modern. www.tate.org.uk

Facing History: Contemporary Portraiture

Until 24 April 2016

Photos and prints from the last 20 years.
Victoria and Albert Museum. www.vam.ac.uk

ENGLAND - NORTH

Canaletto: Celebrating Britain

22 October to 14 February 2016

The Italian master's decade in the UK explored.
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria.
www.abbothall.org.uk

Naomi Alexander: Domesticity

Until 31 October

Quiet and contemplative interior paintings.
Shingley Art Gallery, Gateshead.
www.shingleyartgallery.org.uk

REALITY

Until 29 November

Six decades of kitchen sink British painting.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Richard Forster

Until 3 January 2016

Hyperreal pencil drawings of vintage photos.
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.
www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

Colin Rodney Burrows: Out of the Ordinary

Until 1 November

Retrospective of a local photorealist painter.
Salford Museum and Art Gallery.
www.salfordcommunityleisure.co.uk

Antony Gormley: Elemental

Until 15 November

Two series of drawings by the figurative sculptor.
The Atkinson, Southport. www.theatkinson.co.uk

Watercolour Treasures

Until 31 October

Town, country and coastal scenes.
South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear. www.southshieldsmuseum.org.uk

Rob Ryan: Listen to the World

Until 1 November

Chopped-up whimsy from the papercut king.
Yorkshire Sculpture Park. www.ysp.co.uk

ENGLAND - SOUTH

The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer

Until 20 March 2016

Passionate and spiritual paintings of daily life.
Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham, Berkshire.
www.stanleyspencer.org.uk

Terry Frost

10 October to 9 January 2016

20th-century abstract art split across two venues.
Newlyn Art Gallery and The Exchange, Cornwall.
www.newlynartgallery.co.uk

William and Evelyn de Morgan

Until 13 April 2016

The Suffragette painter and her ceramicist husband.
Watts Gallery, Guildford. www.wattsgallery.org.uk

Lowry by the Sea

Until 1 November

Last chance to see the Salford painter's coastal art.
Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. www.jerwoodgallery.org

ENCHANTED DREAMS: THE PRE-RAPHAELITE ART OF EDWARD ROBERT HUGHES

17 October to 21 February 2016

The well-connected Edward Robert Hughes was the nephew of Pre-Raphaelite painter Arthur Hughes and an apprentice to William Holman Hunt. This first-ever major retrospective combines delicate chalk portraiture with more visionary oil scenes, such as *Night with her Train of Stars*.
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
www.bmag.org.uk



ARTHUR MELVILLE

10 October to 17 January 2016

If ever there was such a thing as a revolutionary watercolourist, Arthur Melville might just be it. Born in Forfarshire in 1855, he spent much of his 49 years travelling across Europe, Northern Africa and the Far East, bringing back large-scale depictions of fishing ports and city bazaars.

Melville's then-innovative wet-in-wet technique resulted in dramatic, rich colours presented with a real clarity – something the gallery brilliantly describes as “stained-glass intensity”. Works such as 1892's *The Sapphire Sea* influenced his peers, the Glasgow Boys, and now he looks set to inspire a new generation via this must-see display. Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh. www.nationalgalleries.org

Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector

12 September to 24 January 2016

Includes Andy Warhol's kitsch cookie jars. Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich. www.scva.ac.uk

The Bigger Picture

12 September to 21 November

Showcasing the diversity of Cornish art. Penlee House Gallery and Museum, Penzance. www.penleehouse.org.uk

John Hinchcliffe

10 October to 16 January 2016

Retrospective of decorative art and ceramics. Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire. www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

Ben Johnson: Spirit of Place

18 September to 23 January 2016

Solo retrospective of architectural paintings. Southampton City Art Gallery. www.southampton.gov.uk

Going to Town: Scenes of Urban Life

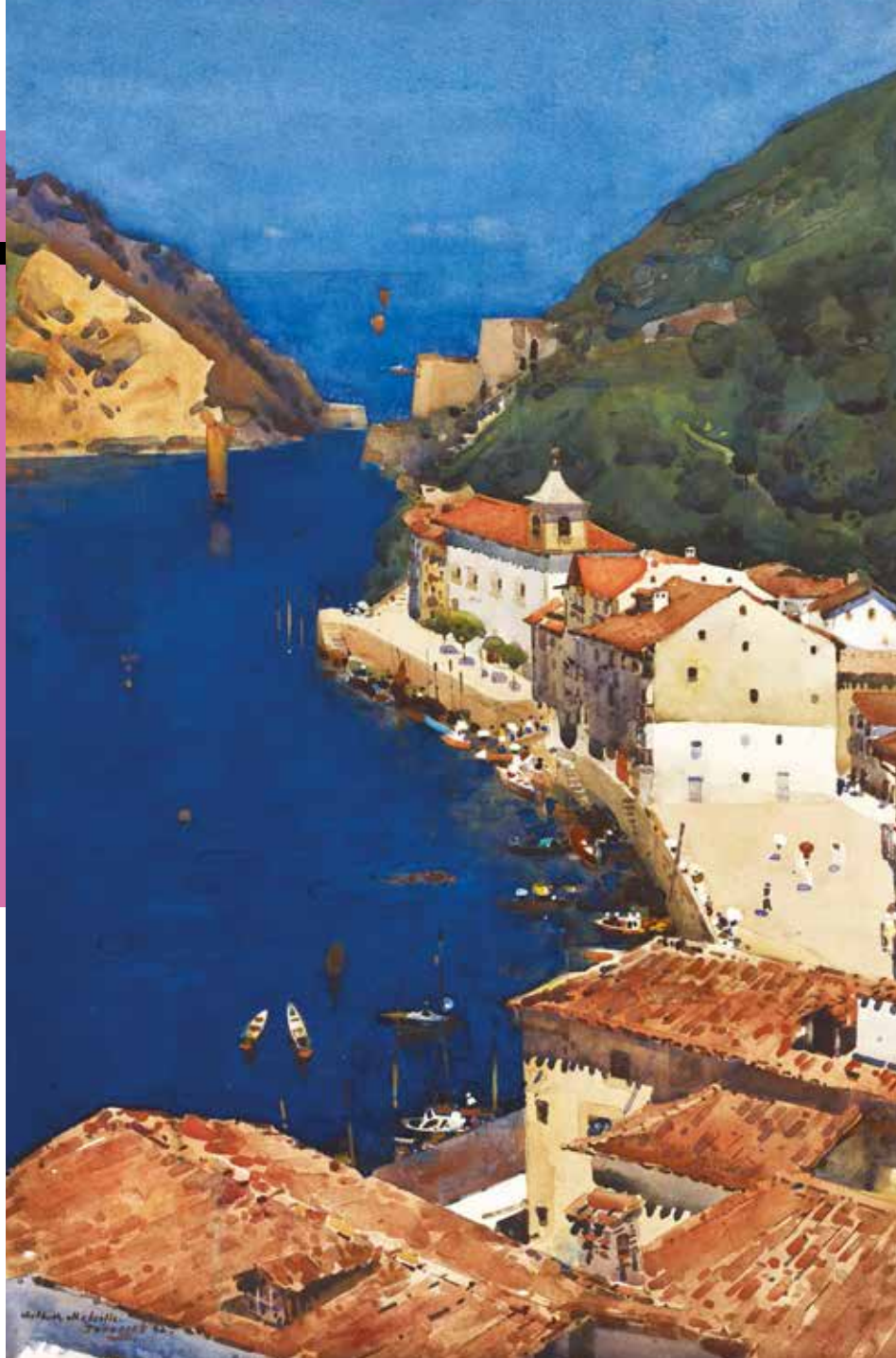
30 September to 12 March 2016

Cityscapes by John Nash, Leon Kossoff and more. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery. www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk

Quentin Blake: Inside Stories

10 October to 17 January 2016

The illustrator's first drafts and storyboards revealed. The Lightbox, Woking. www.thelightbox.org.uk

**SCOTLAND****Scottish Artists 1750-1900**

Until 7 February 2016

Caledonian paintings from the Royal Collection. Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. www.royalcollection.org.uk

The Kangaroo and the Moose

1 October to 21 February 2016

Wildlife art from an era of New World exploration. Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow. www.gla.ac.uk

Scottish Identity in Colour

Until 31 January 2016

Portraits inspired by Cézanne and Whistler. Fergusson Gallery, Perth. www.pkc.gov.uk

Reflections of the East

20 September to 23 December

Scottish painters exploring links with China.

University of Stirling Art Collection. www.stir.ac.uk

WALES**John Carroll: On a Wing and a Prayer**

26 September to 8 November

New paintings inspired by Iron Age excavations. Oriel Ynys Môn, Anglesey. www.kyffinwilliams.info

IRELAND**Colin Davidson: Silent Testimony**

Until 17 January 2016

Politically-motivated portraits in oils. Ulster Museum, Belfast. www.nmni.com

The Language of Dreams

2 October to 6 February 2016

Surrealist art inspired by our unconscious minds. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork. www.crawfordartgallery.ie

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THE GUARDIAN





## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### BOOK ILLUSTRATION COMPETITION 2016

**Brief:** Participants are invited to illustrate Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*. Long-listed entries feature in a House of Illustration exhibition, while the overall winner receives a £5,000 commission from the Folio Society.

**Deadline:** 18 January 2016

**Exhibition:** 29 January to 6 March 2016 at the House of Illustration, London N1

**Enter online:**

[www.foliosociety.com](http://www.foliosociety.com)

### RBA ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2016

**Brief:** The Royal Society of British Artists requests up to six artworks in any media (including sculpture and original prints) that display a high standard of skill and expression.

**Deadline:** 11 December

**Receiving day:**

23 January 2016

**Exhibition:** 17 March to 2 April 2016 at Mall Galleries, London SW1

**Enter online:**

[www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)



### MUNCH ON A MUNCH

If you've got an appetite for great paintings, the Art Fund's *Edible Masterpieces* could be just the thing. Launched last year, this tasty little fundraiser invites creative foodie types to recreate famous artworks with the contents of your kitchen cupboards. Previous highlights included a cheese carving of Rodin's *The Kiss* and a flapjack inspired by Munch's *The Scream*. Submit by 11 October at [www.artfund.org/edible](http://www.artfund.org/edible) for the chance to win a National Art Pass and lots of kitchen goodies.

### NEXT ISSUE: PAINT A PORTRAIT IN JUST FOUR COLOURS

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# BRIGHT YOUNG THING

PAINTING ON THE SET OF ITV'S *DOWNTON ABBEY* WAS A DREAM OPPORTUNITY FOR **PHOEBE DICKINSON**. THE TALENTED YOUNG OIL PAINTER TELLS **TERRI EATON** HOW HER PENCIL ALMOST PUT A HALT TO THE FINAL SERIES AND WHY LADY MARY IS THE IDEAL SUBJECT. PHOTOS: **GARETH IWAN JONES**

**ABOVE** *Lady Mary having her Breakfast in Bed*, oil on canvas, 42x32cm  
**RIGHT** Phoebe in residence at Leighton House











It was a Sunday evening like any other when Phoebe Dickinson settled herself down in front of the television to watch the latest episode of *Downton Abbey*. She'd had a long day in her Chelsea studio completing various portrait commissions and the ITV period drama was just the tonic she needed to relax into the evening.

Or so she thought. The opening credits rolled, the distinctive theme tune filled the room and, within minutes, she was sketching excitedly in the screen's direction. "Lady Mary was having breakfast in bed and I felt her relaxed pose would make a really sweet painting so I paused the telly, took a photo and started drawing,"

says Phoebe. "I couldn't shake the feeling that *Downton Abbey* would make a great subject, but I wasn't sure the best way to go about it."

Having studied at both the Charles H Cecil Studios in Florence and Lavender Hill Studios in London, the 31-year-old has a classical maturity to her painting that is reminiscent of last month's cover portrait by John Singer Sargent. However, her lively application of colour gives her work a modern sparkle. She was an ideal candidate on paper to interpret the popular TV series but she needed a hook.

Then an idea hit her – what if she could paint the cast on set? Phoebe

**ABOVE** *Edith and the Crew on Set at Highclere Castle*, oil on canvas, 53x32cm

had visions of capturing Carson memorising his lines ahead of a scene or Lady Edith having her make up retouched. She knew from the series' handsome viewing figures (it regularly hits 9 million per episode in Britain alone) that there would be an appetite for the project, while also satisfying her personal interest too.

Phoebe approached Carnival Films, the production company behind the programme, to ask whether she could visit Highclere Castle in Oxfordshire while they were filming the sixth and final series, which airs this autumn.

"They liked the idea straight away, although they said that I couldn't portray certain scenes," she says.





"I had to be careful of who or what I painted, but I'm very happy with the results. I've got a series of paintings that have documented the making of this iconic show and it was really fun to juxtapose the historical setting with the modern cameras in view."

Phoebe was given unprecedented access during her time at Highclere. As a fan of the show, the temptation was to watch the plots unfolding before her eyes, but she diligently

**RIGHT** *Study of Carson on Set at Highclere Castle*, oil on panel, 36x21cm

reminded herself there was work to be done. The use of oil paint was forbidden on set, but even her humble pencil posed a surprising problem when the cameras were rolling.

"The sound of the nib scratching across my sketchbook was picked up by the microphone so in the end, I had to simply observe and take photos. The crew were so busy, it must have been annoying having me around," she says, laughing. "However, I was also allowed to work from *Downton Abbey's* extensive photography archive to complete my project back in my studio, which was very exciting."

Scenes for potential paintings were everywhere in the vast Berkshire stately home, from the proud State Dining Room that is home to Van Dyck's portrait of King Charles I, to the beautiful library that boasts almost 6,000 books. It was the scenes involving the female members of the cast, however, that regularly inspired Phoebe. The actresses' elegance, poise and stunning costumes were an ideal complement to the opulent surroundings and the artist enjoyed watching the cast at work. "I feel as if I've gotten to know the characters like I would during a regular commission."

Phoebe's painting of Carson the butler was selected for the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' annual exhibition in April and she hopes to exhibit more of her *Downton Abbey* paintings at some point in the future. In the meantime, however, she's busy completing a second labour of love inspired by another prestigious property: the Leighton House Museum.

The striking museum in Kensington was once home to the Victorian artist Frederic, Lord Leighton and is famous for its exotic Middle Eastern interiors. Phoebe first visited last year for a life-drawing class. "Ann Witheridge from Lavender Hill Studios teaches

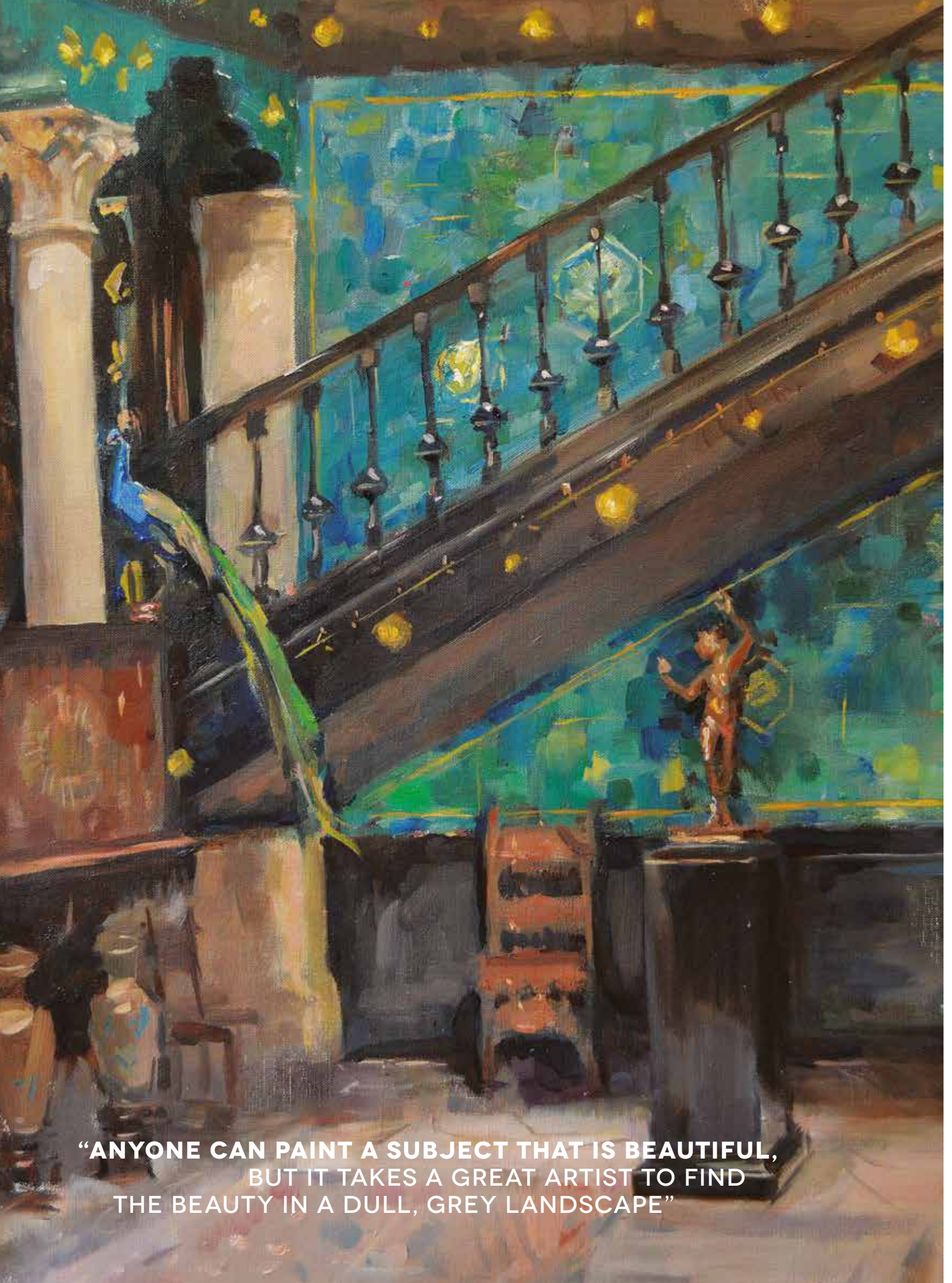
there and so I decided to go," she says. "Needless to say I was completely blown away. It has such amazing architecture and cool features."

It was during that first visit that Phoebe discovered Leighton House offers artist residencies. The application process proved hard work. She spent an entire family holiday trying to write why she was the best person for the job, but her words didn't flow as freely as her paint. "I tried really hard to impress, but I'm not >



**PHOEBE ENJOYED WATCHING THE CAST AT WORK**  
**"I FEEL AS IF I'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW THE CHARACTERS**  
**LIKE I WOULD DURING A REGULAR COMMISSION"**





**“ANYONE CAN PAINT A SUBJECT THAT IS BEAUTIFUL,  
BUT IT TAKES A GREAT ARTIST TO FIND  
THE BEAUTY IN A DULL, GREY LANDSCAPE”**



very good at writing. I just wanted to show them my artwork and hope they'd pick me on the basis of my paintings."

Phoebe's perseverance was rewarded and she began her three-month residency in May. The stint included 10 days of painting inside the museum and the opportunity to work towards a group exhibition.

Given the chance to paint inside the house this time, Phoebe's oil paints were a whisker away from many irreplaceable antiques but she kept a level head throughout. "I was calmer knowing they were happy for us to paint there because the whole point of the residency is to paint from life," she says. "The initial challenge was the fact it's open to the public so all these visitors would be wandering around and it would distract me when time was precious. However, many of them were experts in Victorian art and architecture. I learned a lot."

When painting in locations as beautiful as Leighton House Museum or Highclere Castle, the real skill comes in being able to pick your focal point carefully. Phoebe could have spent an eternity trying to capture the glimmer of every sequin on Lady Mary's dress or the pattern of each Moroccan tile in Leighton's decadent Arab Hall, but she chose instead to follow an impressionistic and selective approach.

With such an obvious flair for suggesting intricacies and detail, has Phoebe begun her search for the next ambitious subject yet?

"I'd love to do something grand again but I wouldn't want to paint another stately home for the sake of it – it has to come naturally," she says.

"I'm not going to involve myself in another project unless it's something that will allow me to progress. My goal is to eventually work towards a really high-end exhibition with fewer sketches and more larger works, but it's hard to fit that all in around my commissions."

As well as portraits, property and *Downton Abbey*, Phoebe's other passion is painting *en plein air*. "I love



**ABOVE** Phoebe at Leighton House

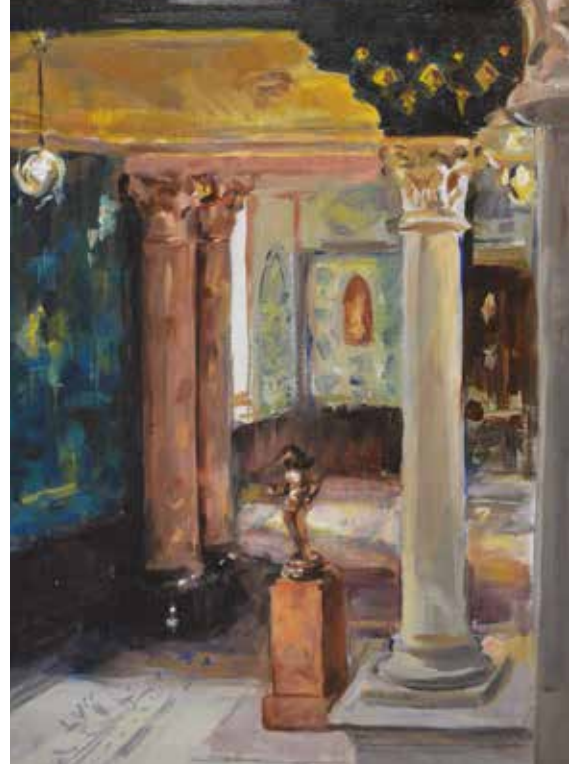
**TOP RIGHT** *The Arab Hall Painted from the Staircase at Leighton House*, oil on canvas, 50x60cm

**OPPOSITE PAGE** *Lord Leighton's Staircase*, oil on canvas, 50x60cm

working outdoors," she says. "It makes me feel alive."

Painting in the elements calls for quick decision-making, which helped Phoebe enormously at both Highclere Castle and Leighton House. She was able to spot strong compositions and interesting plays of light from a distance, before developing those observations into paintings. She is keen to invest more time into her plein air practice as it continues to sharpen her skills across the board. "Anyone can paint a subject that is beautiful, but it takes a great artist to find the beauty in a dull, grey landscape," she says. "I don't think I'm quite there yet."

Phoebe is on a constant quest for improvement, something that makes her admirably humble and self-conscious despite her successes to date. She is particularly nervous about hosting her first painting workshop in



Spain next year. "I was on holiday in Trasierra with a friend at quite an artistic hotel and they asked if I could return in 2016 to host a series of classes, which I've never done before. I'm not sure how good I'll be at articulating myself, but I think I'll learn a lot from teaching."

Phoebe is willing to try her hand at anything once, whether that means causing a ruckus with a noisy pencil at *Downton Abbey* or overcoming her panic of public speaking to teach others how to improve their own skills. But even if words fail her once in a while, her fierce ambition, splendid paintings and extraordinary projects are speaking for themselves.

**Phoebe's work features in *The Craft of Drawing and Painting: Celebrating Tradition Today*, which runs until 4 October at the Leighton House Museum, London W12. [www.phoebedickinson.com](http://www.phoebedickinson.com)**

## A PRIVATE PALACE OF ART

LORD LEIGHTON'S FORMER HOME IS A MUST-SEE DESTINATION FOR ARTISTS

Leighton House was once home to Frederic, Lord Leighton, a Victorian painter and president of the Royal Academy. He acquired the plot in 1864 to showcase his fabulous collection of paintings in suitably grand setting. The house's decadent Arab Hall was inspired by Leighton's travels to Turkey, Egypt and Syria.

The Grade II-listed building opened to the public in 1929 and today holds 81 oil paintings by Leighton in its permanent collection, as well as artworks by John Everett Millais, GF Watts and John Singer Sargent.

[www.rbkc.gov.uk/museums](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/museums)





# Artist's Dream Cottage

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The property is on the market for the first time in 45 years as the owners are retiring from photography.

It is situated in a secluded peaceful location with rural views and great privacy, yet only 4 miles from Haywards Heath main line station to London, Brighton and Gatwick and 8 miles from the county town of Lewes. The cottage comprises sitting room with large Inglenook fireplace, dining room, kitchen with separate utility room, three to four bedrooms and a family bathroom.

The mature gardens of approximately 0.3 of an acre surrounding the cottage are approached by a private driveway with parking for several cars and adjacent to the studio there is a swimming pool with a surrounding patio.

The attached 5 acres of woodland has views to the South Downs and is a perfect location for painting and drawing.

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# GREAT ESCAPE

CAN'T FIND ENOUGH TIME OR HEADSPACE TO DEVOTE TO YOUR PAINTING? AN ARTISTIC RETREAT OFFERS THE CHANCE FOR A PERIOD OF UNINTERRUPTED CREATIVITY, AS **ALICE WRIGHT** DISCOVERS AT CORNWALL'S BRISONS VEOR







“ARTISTS RELISH THE  
FACT THAT THEY’RE NOT  
EASILY CONTACTABLE  
- THIS IS A FEW WEEKS  
WHERE THEY CAN EAT,  
SLEEP AND BREATHE  
THEIR WORK”





Finding somewhere to retreat from the distractions of modern life to focus on work amid inspirational surroundings is something of a dream for most artists. So it's no surprise that, as word gets out about a residential creative workspace on Cornwall's spectacular coastline, applications are flooding in to spend time there.

Perched on the cliffs of Cape Cornwall about 10 miles west of St Ives, Brisons Veor offers artists of all persuasions, from painters to musicians, a place to stay and work for periods of one to four weeks. The property was originally part of the boiler house for the local tin mine, but was since adapted to provide accommodation for up to four people (six at a squeeze), along with two studio spaces.

In 1978, the building was converted by an architect and purchased by the American benefactor, Tracy O'Kates. It was run on an informal basis as an affordable artists' residence until 1992, when the organisation was registered as a charity and a formal board of trustees were appointed.

Since then it has continued to provide working accommodation for creatives, and over the last few years has been undergoing a period of revitalisation, including some major renovation work. Another significant change is that, while the residencies were originally available to women only, from 2011 they were opened to men too. There is also new focus on promoting the residencies and, as word spreads, interest is growing from artists looking for a period of uninterrupted creativity in a unique setting.

"The whole concept is about enabling artists to have time to concentrate on their work or a particular project," says Sara Bowler, the trust manager.

"It's very isolated, there's no telephone there and no fixed Internet connection. I think people quite relish the fact that they're not easily contactable – there's that notion that this is a week or two weeks where they can eat, sleep and breathe their work."

Creatives from all disciplines are welcomed and the trust is trying to encourage visual artists with a wider range of interests to apply, as well as more writers and musicians too. While the sea and landscape are a particular attraction, Sara says the area also offers a wealth of inspiration for possible themes, from the rich local history to more contemporary issues, such as climate change.

It was the spectacular scenery that first drew plein air painter Louise Collis to Brisons Veor. She spent two weeks there in April and found the experience of staying and working in such a remote and beautiful location hugely stimulating. Louise painted outside most days, yet even when rain prevented her from venturing out she was able to work from the studio, with its stunning sea views.

"I was painting from as soon as I could possibly paint in the morning until the sun went down and came back with about 40 paintings," she says. "It was quite intense and I was exhausted by the end of it."

Painter and printmaker Anita Reynolds also found a residency at Brisons Veor an invaluable opportunity to become completely absorbed in her work. She spent a week there in the winter of December 2014 during a three-year project, *Outline South West*, in which she walked the 630-mile South West Coast Path from Minehead in Somerset to Poole in Dorset, producing prints along the



ABOVE A sketch by Brisons Veor resident Anita Reynolds' *Outline South West* project

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Anita sketching the coast; Louise Collis's *Rosewall Hill Towards St Ives*; the boats in nearby Penberth Cove; Louise's artwork in the studio; Louise painting on the cliff; the Brisons Veor studio view

way. Much of the project involved sketching as she went and then returning to her studio to turn the sketches into prints, which presented difficulties. "I had a lot of trouble when I got back to the studio to remain immersed in it", she says.

Staying at Brisons Veor enabled her to work in situ and stay focused on the project. Anita took her own printing press with her so she could sketch during the day and make prints in the evening. "It's very much a proper studio, so you can make a mess of it," she says. "It's not a holiday let, but a proper working place. It feels like a place that a lot of people have created work in."


The functional nature of the accommodation is conducive to a productive, creative atmosphere and affordable prices have succeeded in making it accessible to as many as possible. The trust is non-profit making and from 2016 will charge just £250 per week for up to two people out of season, rising to £350 per week during peak season.

Responding to increasing demand for residencies, the trust is testing a new application system this year, with four deadlines throughout the year corresponding to residencies in the relevant quarter the following year. Artists are asked to describe their practice and explain what they would like to work on during their residency – and why they think they should be offered a place.

Residencies are already fully booked until April 2016 and applications have come from as far afield as New Zealand and the USA. From painters to poets, artists of all disciplines are being lured by the creative promise of retreating to this beautiful corner of the world to think and work undisturbed by the bustle of modern life.

[www.brisonsveor.org.uk](http://www.brisonsveor.org.uk)





**“JOHN’S SELF-PORTRAIT  
REMAINS A BREATHTAKING  
EXERCISE IN PRECISELY  
CONTROLLED SCRUTINY”**



# Quiet LIFE

GWEN JOHN'S INTROSPECTIVE PAINTINGS OF THOUGHTFUL FIGURES AND SILENT ROOMS REFLECTED THE ARTIST'S TASTE FOR THE SIMPLE THINGS IN LIFE, AS HER BIOGRAPHER, **ALICIA FOSTER**, EXPLAINS

Gwen John made a momentous journey during her lifetime, not in distance, but rather in environment and culture. Born in 1876 in Haverfordwest, a small town in Victorian Wales, she made her way into the artistic tumult of Paris in the first decade of the 20th century via the creative seedbed of London's Slade School of Fine Art. Although her work shifted in style from the rigorous, detailed draughtsmanship of her art school training to the loose dabs and strokes of pale, chalky paint on canvas that characterise her later paintings, her gaze remained intensely focussed on female sitters, sometimes herself, and sometimes accompanied by her much-loved cats: a seemingly quiet and rather conventional subject matter. Yet in recent years she has come to be seen as an artist who can be understood as truly modern, albeit a modernity of the most mysteriously calm and still kind.

John's intensity of focus was there from the start. Her 1902 *Self-Portrait* was bought by the Slade professor, Frederick Brown, from an exhibition of student work, and remains a breathtaking exercise in dispassionate, precisely controlled scrutiny. The carefully-painted, unruly strand of hair escaping from the otherwise neat hair may be a sign that control did not, in this case, mean conformity.

John would never marry or have children, perhaps realising the toll this would take upon her work. Instead she was seemingly content to be a young female in the era of the 'New Woman', a figure who seemed to symbolise the possibility of independent life apart from family ties – but that is not to say there was no passion. As a student there were passionate friendships: subsisting on fruit and nuts in student flats near the Slade's home on Gower Street,



© MUSEUMS SHEFFIELD, TATE/PHOTO © TATE, LONDON 2015

attempting to walk through France to Rome with her friend Dorothy McNeill (later immortalised as Dorelia in paintings by Gwen's brother, Augustus), and then setting up home in rented rooms in Paris with two fellow Slade women in order to train at James Abbott Whistler's atelier. He reportedly commended John's fine sense of tone, and indeed there are similarities between both artists' mastery of nuance and subtle yet meticulously-ordered palettes.

Paris brought Gwen John into the sphere of another master in the form of Auguste Rodin. By the early 1900s when she met the great sculptor he was ensconced in the grandeur of the Hôtel Biron on the Left Bank, surrounded by studio assistants and society ladies. John became one of his models (including posing for his 1908 sculpture

**ABOVE** *A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris*, 1907-'09, oil on canvas, 31.7x26.7cm

**OPPOSITE PAGE** *Self-Portrait*, 1902, oil on canvas, 44.8x34.9cm



## **“THE CONVALESCENT DRAWS US INTO THE ATMOSPHERE OF CONCENTRATED INTROSPECTION OF THE YOUNG GIRL READING – A PRIVATE MOMENT THAT REMINDS US OF THE DUTCH MASTERS”**

*Monument to James Abbott Whistler*, who had died five years previously) and also his lover for a time.

John learnt plenty from watching Rodin at work: his practice of making rapid drawings from life, for example, helped to inspire her own experiments with the nude, both with other models and with her own body. She visited many other studios and galleries in Paris as well, developing a wide circle of female artist friends and reading extensively. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke was Rodin's secretary for a while and around 1906 he befriended John and lent her many books, including volumes of his own work. Rilke's writing has a particularity and power of vision – sometimes

looking out at the world, sometimes exploring religious imagery and feeling – which are qualities that were increasingly shared by Gwen John's own paintings.

From 1910 onwards John began to read and make notes on religious thought, and three years later she was received into the Catholic faith. The artist moved to the green suburb of Meudon on the banks of the Seine, where she began a series of paintings of Mère Marie Poussepin, founder of the Dominican order of nuns who had their convent there. She also drew congregants in church, often sketching from life and then later colouring the drawings with flat washes of gouache.

John's new choice of subject matter and working method was sympathetic to Maurice Denis, an enormously influential figure at this time in the French art world, who was arguing for a new kind of art in which faith was to be expressed in the most modern techniques rather than hackneyed academic images of religious ecstasy. In *A Lady Reading* we see one of John's early attempts to unite a recognisably religious subject (she wrote that she wanted the figure to look like a “*vierge* [virgin] of Dürer”) with a modern interior and technique. John considered Denis such an important influence on her work that she included one of his *pensées sur l'art* (or “thoughts on art”) in her solo exhibition held at the New Chenil Galleries in London in 1926. The *pensée* she chose talked of Cézanne, whose method of working in series and monumental treatment of form also had a great effect on her work; indeed, she was later to describe a volume of reproductions of his paintings that she owned as “very precious” to her.

Following her New Chenil Galleries show, John was able to afford to buy herself a property in Meudon, the mark of a successful artist (Rodin had kept a villa there). By this time she had acquired an influential patron in the form of the American lawyer John Quinn, who had lent her work to the seminal *International Exhibition of Modern Art* in New York in 1913, and who was to pay her a regular stipend in return for paintings. His glamorous girlfriend, the poet Jeanne Robert Foster, spent time with the Welsh artist in Paris, reporting back to Quinn about John's meeting with Henri Matisse, and of her fame among the painters there, who “all knew of Miss John... and the Salon takes all she will send them”. Indeed Gwen John's status was such that in 1924 she was invited to send her work into the Salon des Tuileries without having to pass before the selecting jury.

Establishing her reputation did not mean complacency, however. As late as 1936, just three years before her death, John was still testing her art against what was happening in Paris, taking classes with the artist and theorist André Lhote. Looking at *The Convalescent*, one of a series of eight closely-related paintings that John made on this theme earlier in her career, we can see how it brings together the cultural ‘call to order’ after the war, the resurgence of classical and tranquil subject matter which

**BELOW** *A Lady Reading*, 1909-’11, oil on canvas, 40.3x25.4cm



TALE/PHOTO © TALE, LONDON 2015





characterised many of the leading moderns at this time, from Lhote to Denis to Picasso, with an enigmatic symbolism and a modernist technique of reduction and economy that she refined almost to the point at which the subject dissolves into the medium. We are drawn into the atmosphere of concentrated introspection of the young girl reading, a quiet, private moment that might immediately remind us of the past, of the Dutch masters, yet we can also be aware of the great contemporary resonance the

title and subject matter is likely to have had in a country which was itself convalescing from the terrible effects of the conflict. At the same time the eye is brought up short by the paint: the confident, bold, summarisation of the model, the chair, the objects on the table, the handling of medium so eloquent yet restrained to the point of austerity. It is an exquisite balance that is uniquely John's own.

**Alicia's new book, *British Artists: Gwen John*, is published by Tate, RRP £16.99. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)**

**TOP LEFT** *The Convalescent*, 1918-'19, oil on canvas, 33.7x25.4cm



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# THE WORKING ARTIST

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I want to share a story that really brought home to me the impact an artist's social skills can have on their audience.

My mother died recently and I wanted to buy a piece of jewellery in her memory. After looking long and hard at many options, I stumbled across a jeweller manning her own stand at an arts festival. I found a beautiful bangle and poured out the whole story to her, explaining how significant the purchase was to me. Her response was one of complete indifference, making me feel both foolish and disappointed. She let me try the bangle on, but by then it had entirely lost its magic and I knew it wouldn't do for such a special memory.

The moment you engage with strangers about your art, whether to sell it or just to explain it, you begin a relationship. If you can meet your audience's curiosity with confidence, enthusiasm and a genuine interest in their concerns, you are well on the way to giving them good reason to invest in you. You may not make a sale every time, but you will make a positive impression and perhaps give people reason to recommend or return to your work.

Shyness can be a real barrier to making that positive impression. I practise all the time to keep my confidence up,

chatting to all kinds of people whenever I can. If you can start a random conversation with a stranger, it's easy to talk confidently about your work. Enthusiasm is something we all have for our art, but letting it shine through – rather than falling into apology or seeking reassurance – is another matter. Show a client the joy in what you do and save the angst for your family. If you have no enthusiasm in your work, you can hardly expect the public to accept your expert opinion.

If someone is generous enough to share this with you, relish that experience. People give you their stories as a way of connecting with your work and the more you respect that, the more likely you are to win their confidence and secure their support.

[www.lauraboswell.co.uk](http://www.lauraboswell.co.uk)

**ABOVE** *Chiltern Seasons Autumn*, Japanese woodblock print, 59x42cm

“

**PEOPLE SHARE THEIR STORIES AS A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH YOUR WORK**

”





IN THE STUDIO WITH

# ROSE BLAKE

SIR PETER BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATOR DAUGHTER OPENS THE DOORS TO HER SHARED EAST LONDON WORKSPACE AS SHE PREPARES FOR A FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION. WORDS AND PHOTOS: **STEVE PILL**

## What's the concept behind your first exhibition, *Now I Am An Artist?*

I'm a jobbing illustrator and I was quite scared – I've been in group shows but I've never had a full gallery to play with before. I came up with this idea of drawing my own galleries on paper and creating works within them. It was a way of making work that I felt comfortable with.

## How did you make the artworks?

I drew the galleries and sent them out to a digital printer to make fine art giclée prints. I then hand-finished each print with collage and paint.

## I spotted some unusual tins of paint in your studio. What do you use them for?

It's called 1 Shot. It's sign-writer's paint – enamel paint, basically. It's got a really glossy finish to it and the colours are so beautiful. It's nice on the prints because it is so different to the flatness of the paper.



## How did you get started in illustration?

I did a foundation at Kingston, not really knowing what I wanted to do. I just remember having a tutorial and one of the tutors basically saying: "You're an illustrator". It suited me, all the problem solving and making something that is easily understandable to someone.

## What commissions did you do to begin with?

I started off doing really bad business and financial magazines, stuff like that. I was really depressed about it. A friend gave me the email address of the art director of the *Opinion* pages of the *New York Times*. I cold-emailed him and he gave me a job the next day. Once I had that on my client list, I just got way more work.

## What's the strangest commission you've received?

It was for a Japanese toilet company. I got this email







## MY STRANGEST JOB? ILLUSTRATING A MANUAL FOR A JAPANESE TOILET

addressed to 'Mr Rose Blake' saying they'd like me to be the illustrator for a toilet called the Washlet. It cleans you after you've used it and they wanted me to draw a frog showing you how to use the toilet for the manual. I turned around to the studio to see if someone had sent it as a joke!

**Despite having a famous artist father, you seem to have very much done things on your own terms. Was that a conscious decision?**

I don't want to live off his reputation. I think about it every day, it's obviously very present, but I've never gone to an art director and said, "This is my dad, can you hire me?" I love him and he's helped me so much through his mind and being my dad, but I would never try and get work off the back of that link.

**Do you chat about art a lot at home?**

Not really. Dad will show me what he has been working on and he'll want to know what I've been working on, but we're more likely to talk about *The Archers*.

**Did your parents encourage your artistic side early on?**

They just let me get on with it. I was always adamant that I wasn't going to get into the arts, but my dad always thought that I would even when I said that I wouldn't. When I was younger, they'd take me to shows all the time so I'd just happen to see these amazing things.

**What are you like in the studio?**

I'm really boring. I get to the studio early and I work through. I'll have a 20-minute lunch break but I am pretty focused all the time. My studio is really quiet today but there are 10 of us in there normally so it can be really noisy. You have to just put headphones on and get into the groove.

**Would you ever consider a space of your own?**

I really like having people around, especially the people I share with. It has been really hard doing the show in this space though. I can't really have work out all the time and I've had to apologise for taking up lots of space. I would like a dedicated studio for that.

**What's next for you?**

I am doing a children's book with Wide Eyed Editions. I'll be starting work on that as soon as the private view is finished. I've also had an idea for the next show as well. I've got a big list of all the ideas I want to do.

**Rose's exhibition, *Now I Am An Artist*, runs from 7-31 October at Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, Charlotte Street, London W1. [www.iamroseblake.com](http://www.iamroseblake.com)**





# Painting Holidays in Italy



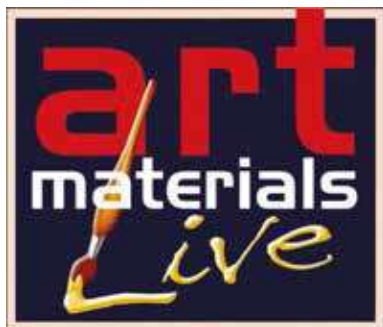
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# BRAZILIAN

# Flair

**FÁBIO CEMBRANELLI** IS FAMED ACROSS THE WORLD FOR HIS FLAMBOYANT WATERCOLOUR STYLE AND INTUITIVE DEMONSTRATIONS. DURING A RARE VISIT TO THE UK, **LAURA BROWN** FOUND OUT WHY THE BRAZILIAN PAINTER THINKS IT IS TIME FOR US BRITISH ARTISTS TO LOOSEN UP A LITTLE

What could be more quintessentially British: a watercolour class by an artist renowned for painting flowers in the green, rolling landscape of Cheshire? However, the crowds have ventured to the lush village of Ledsham not to meet a local master, but a Brazilian painter in the middle of an international jetset schedule. Fábio Cembranelli's pacy, wet-in-wet watercolour technique injects a sense of flair into floral and landscape painting, making it less about accuracy and more about capturing a fleeting moment with confidence and skill.

Sitting in the Sandpiper Studio after his sold-out workshop, Fábio reflects on our collective passion for watercolour. "Here in England it is a culture – watercolour is a very strong medium. It was interesting to see that most of the people that came here already had a style of painting. My style is very loose, I paint with a lot of water and I paint quick, so it's interesting to see all these students that have work that's very detailed". He pauses. "I show them to paint in a more intuitive way, more free."

**TOP** Flower Demo, watercolour on paper, 58x41cm  
**RIGHT** Fábio at his previous workshop in Le Vieux Couvent, Frayssinet, France







**“I’D LIKE TO PAINT THE NORTH-WEST OF ENGLAND.  
THE SKY IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD  
– THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL QUALITY TO THE LIGHT HERE”**

Does he think that the way in which the British approach watercolour is symptomatic of our famed stiff upper lip?

“There is a contrast between my style and the style of most of my British students,” he suggests. “It’s not exactly that I paint what I see, but I paint what I feel. There are some colours in front of me, some kind of compositions that I’m going to remake in my mind. My approach is more instinctive: close your eyes, look at something, then take the essential elements.”

This fast-paced approach to capturing a moment is why he tends to have such wet paper. He starts with a central focal point that he will then work around, experimenting with colours often spontaneously. It is a technique he needs to practice regularly, like a muscle.

“Almost every day I try to do something where I don’t know exactly what’s going to happen. It’s like blind painting – you feel what’s in front of you and then close your eyes

and start making things happen here,” as he points to his head. It’s a dynamic and flamboyant technique that seems in keeping with the young, dashing Brazilian painter. Picture yourself sitting in a watercolour class as the man from São Paulo tells you to feel more, to paint from the heart, and try not to swoon, even a little. But, still, why the subject matter? Are flowers in keeping with this flair?

“I don’t like lines.” He chuckles and then shrugs. “Maybe this is the reason I graduated as an architect and then didn’t want to work as one.”

Fábio’s painting began as a hobby. The first subject he chose were flowers and he just kept on painting them. “I don’t know why exactly, maybe I am attracted to them because it’s something that I know?”

He frowns slightly and leans forward. “It is very difficult to explain,” he says, struggling a little for the right words. “A flower is only going to be there for one day because it is

**ABOVE** *Flower Field*,  
watercolour on  
paper, 59x42cm





**ABOVE** Fábio hosts a workshop at Sandpiper Studio  
**ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT** Two of his demonstration paintings



going to fade, it's going to die. In two or three hours, this poppy will start to fade," he says, gesturing at one of the subjects, "so I have to work quickly to capture it."

The same can be said for light. One of the most striking features of his work is the white space he leaves around the main subjects, almost as if to suggest bleached light. His paintings are like a memory of a hot summer: the fleeting glimpse of a hanging basket on a balcony or a window, the scent of flowers on a table as you pass by.

"It's very important because when you have the white of the paper you have the most powerful light in watercolour. It's like a challenge when I'm painting, I need to leave the white spaces and I know it's not so easy to do it in watercolour. The more white I can save the more I'm going to have a powerful composition."

To allow the painting to evolve quickly and freely, Fábio believes that a background in drawing and an understanding of composition is essential. This is why he thinks there is such a clearly defined watercolour culture in the UK: drawing and sketching are a fundamental part of

art education here. "If you're going to do some intuitive painting, you need to draw, to understand how to put things in a composition. Then you can say to yourself I'm not going to draw, but I know the composition rules."

Fábio travels a great deal. Since May, he's been spreading his ethos of intuitive watercolour painting in workshops across England, Scotland, France, Italy and Canada, with trips to America and Australia planned for this month. Everywhere is different, he says.

"When you look at work in England, you know this is a work from someone English. When you look at [a painting by] someone who lives in France, you know it's a typical French work. There are different subjects, colours. The UK palette is beautiful and very subtle, all greens and cool colours. There are no strong contrasts."

In fact, according to Fábio, you should forget listening for an accent – you can tell where a watercolour artist comes from purely by their palette. Even during a painting holiday in Italy, he says he could spot the English students simply by their chosen colours. As he looks out the window, it suddenly becomes clear to him why that is: "There is a kind of mist here. It's not the same in Italy, where you can see further away. Here it's greener, but very misty."

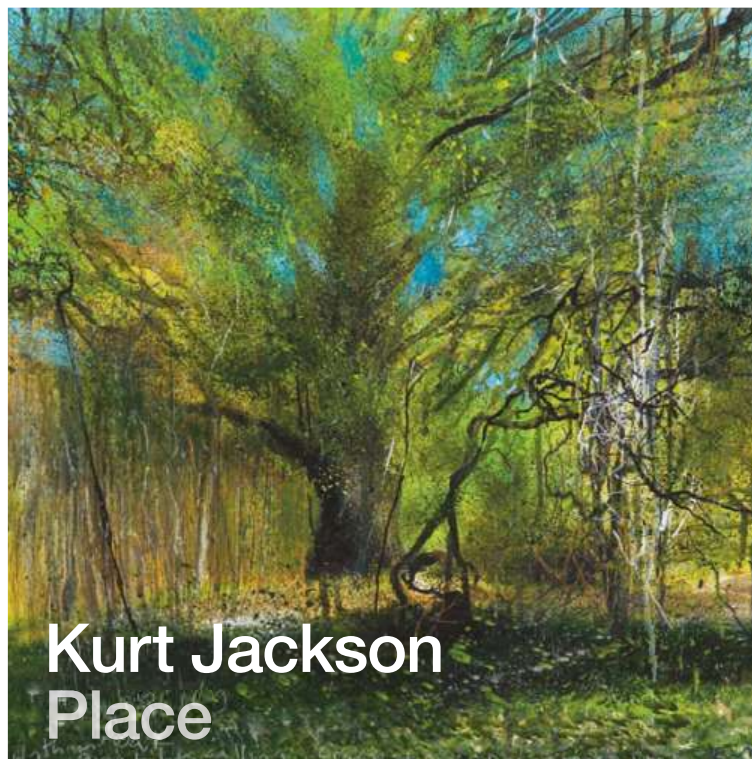
"I'd like to come back and make some landscapes," he says of the northwest of England. "The sky in England is totally different from other parts of the world – there is a beautiful quality to the light here."

Talk turns to the rich orange and red hues that will surround the studio as autumn approaches and Fábio is keen to return later in the future. "Each country has its own landscape, colours and mood, so I need to be influenced by them. If I am teaching in Scotland, for example, my work would change a bit. I am sure all the Scottish sky colours would feature in my upcoming paintings. I use my travels to observe new countries, new colours, new ways of looking at the same subject, new cultures."

As he continues his quest to teach the world to paint, Fábio's flamboyant style might just rub off on us Brits too.

[www.fabiocebranelli.com](http://www.fabiocebranelli.com)





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TALKING TECHNIQUES

# SUZANNE BROOKER

THE AUTHOR OF THE POPULAR *PORTRAIT PAINTING ATELIER* HAS TURNED HER ATTENTION TO LANDSCAPES. SHE SHARES HER APPROACH TO BOTH GENRES WITH **STEVE PILL**



**B**y rights, American painter Suzanne Brooker should be one of the world's most confident artists. Her first book, *Portrait Painting Atelier*, remains on the bestseller lists some five years after it was first published, while places on the courses she teaches at the prestigious Gage Academy of Art in her home city of Seattle are constantly in demand. Her own art has flourished during this period too, so it is reassuring for the rest of us to discover that she still struggles with certain fundamental aspects of her practice.

In her forthcoming second book, *The Elements of Landscape Oil Painting*, she asks a question that doesn't often feature in such expert guide books, yet almost every artist will find themselves pondering at one point or another: can this be painted?

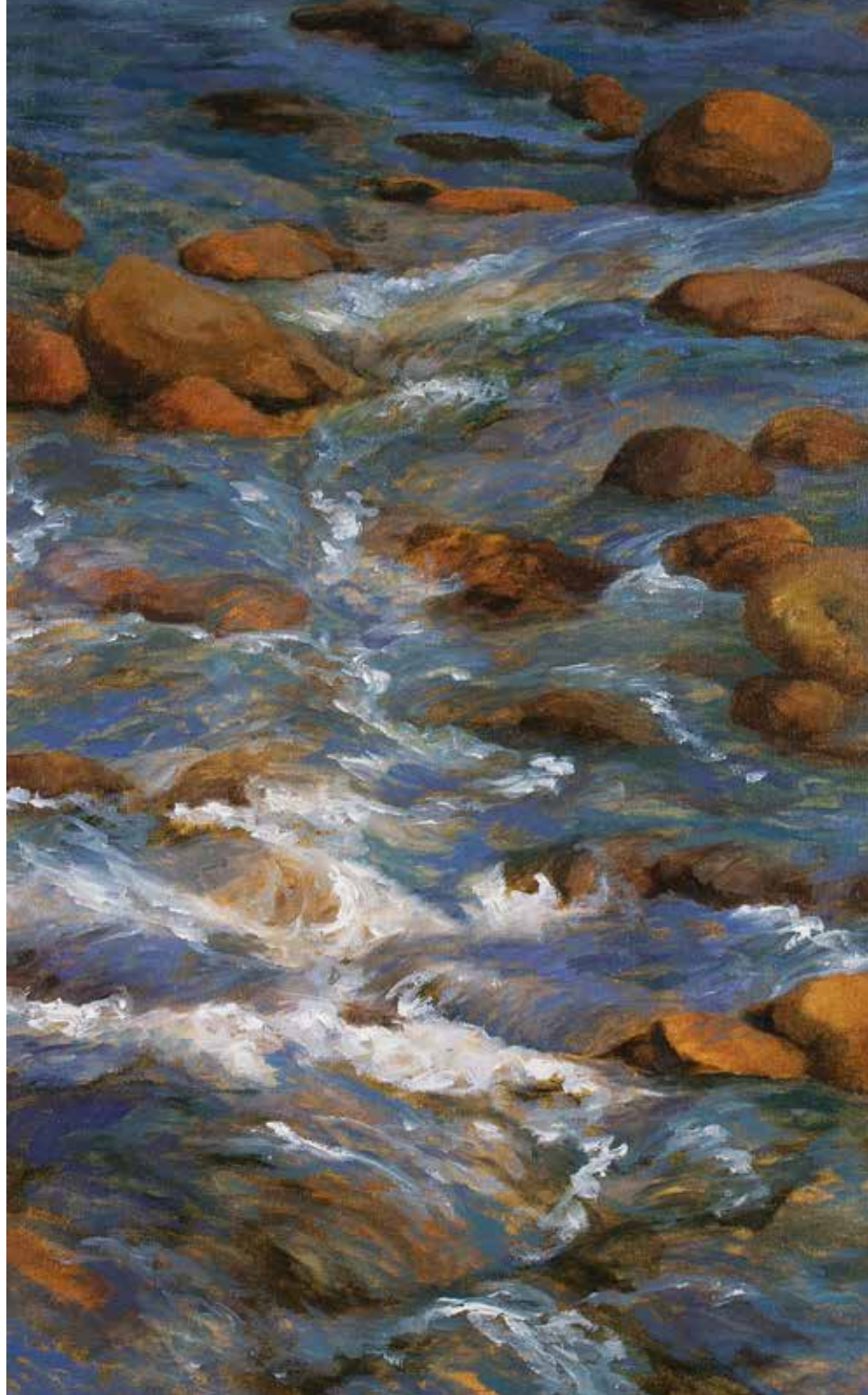
And, like many of us, Suzanne delights in attempting those subjects where the answer to this question isn't always a definite yes. "I'm currently working on two larger paintings where the strongest light is in the background and the foreground is cooler and darker under the tree canopy," she says. "My challenges are how bright and colourful can the background be without popping forward? And how can I keep the cool darks colourful?"

Through a series of studies, Suzanne is able to answer these questions in paint as she has added a thicker, impasto foreground and experimented with the effects of colour intensity by introducing more neutral greens into the mix.

It is this methodical approach to painting that makes her such an engaging tutor and author. "Learning landscape painting can be overwhelming for the beginner or intermediate painter as I discovered teaching numerous classes," she explains. "Each component of the landscape demands a certain focus to colour mixing and brush techniques. For example, how do I make the clouds fluffy or the ground solid? By dividing the structure of *The Elements of Landscape Oil Painting* into these areas of emphasis, each element could be carefully studied and practiced."

Suzanne's own landscape studies began during a summer backpacking trip. Venturing deep into the American wilderness, she found herself her balanced on a log, working on gesso-primed watercolour paper. For the trip, the young artist had packed her oils in a watercolour box and decanted solvents into a vitamin bottle, the latter helping her to create beautiful transparent washes of colour. The results were charming yet crude, she says, but more importantly she alighted on a subject that she continues to explore today: the contrast between the solidity of rocks and the fluidity of water.

Suzanne believes a period of painting on location can be a great way for any artist to shake up their practice.



"Working *en plein air* challenges a painter to adapt new methods and approaches that disrupt their usual painting habits," she says. "If you are devoted to detail, then you'll be challenged to consider the big masses and shapes in the composition. If you're obsessed with colour matching when working from photographs, then you'll be forced to consider the relationships between values as a priority over finding the perfect green colour note. Likewise, timid painters are forced to work quicker using thicker paint, bigger brushes and more vigour in their brush handling. The benefit of this experience is that it invigorates paintings done in the studio, while skills learned in the studio make the fast decisions or intuitive responses outdoors possible."

With this in mind, atelier portraiture and landscape painting on location might seem like two subjects suited to two very different types of artist, yet Suzanne has bridged the gap effortlessly across the course of her two books to date. The key, as she sees it, is a shared emphasis on

**ABOVE** *Fast River Study I*, oil on canvas, 53.3x33cm  
**OPPOSITE PAGE** *Wilderness Lake*, oil on panel, 45.7x30.5cm





working from direct observation. “It is the best practice for an artist to develop a keener perception of the visual world,” she says. “Drawing is an important part of this process as it transforms the casual glance into a penetrating gaze – from looking into seeing.”

As a big believer in direct observation, Suzanne warns artists about the limitations of using a camera in her latest book. Nevertheless, she is also the host of an online video lesson on the Craftsy website entitled *Painting Better Portraits from Photographs*. As such, she has something of a love-hate relationship with the medium as an artistic tool. “Working from photos can be either helpful or harmful to the painting process. For instance, in a portrait photo, the lighting of the subject is critical to obtaining information about the form and feature details. Working from a weak image will often produce weak results unless a painter has enough experience to fill in the missing visual information.”

In contrast to this, Suzanne also warns that cameras can be “deceitful” and believes a photo can tempt an artist into including too much detail and failing to establish a hierarchy within a composition. Her advice in both cases is to always undergo a period of “translating” the photograph by studying the image carefully, interpreting the areas that have been flattened and re-establishing a sense of depth and distance. Ask yourself: if the subject were still in front of you, what would your eye be drawn toward?

Posing such questions is a key part of Suzanne’s practice. “I begin problem-solving my painting with some basic questions: was this painting a struggle to paint because I neglected to prepare the surface with enough care? Was the toned ground a good choice for this light condition and palette? When I examine the paint surface are there places that seem under-painted or overworked? Have I achieved a good balance between the colour notes and values or in other words, is everything in a murky middle value? Is the sky too dark, gloomy not glorious? Are my edges indifferent or the shapes dull? Could the lights be brighter, more intense in colour? The worst problem is when everything seems well done but predictably dull or bland or poorly designed in the composition and this is when drastic action is needed.”

One of the most contentious topics for a landscape painter is whether to use pre-mixed tubes of green pigment or create your own through a blend of yellows and blues. Suzanne lays out both approaches in her book, but when pushed to reveal her own personal preference, she says it is often a case of asking what it is that the subject requires. A yellow-green tree might be better served by a range of pigments, whereas a tree reflected in water might suit a mix with a Phthalo Blue base. “Taking the time to explore colour mixing with test swatches builds our experience using different pigments and visual memory as painters, allowing us to respond more intuitively to pigment selection.”

Suzanne has developed that level of intuition over a varied career to date. After graduating from the California

“WORKING FROM DIRECT OBSERVATION IS  
**THE BEST PRACTICE FOR AN ARTIST**  
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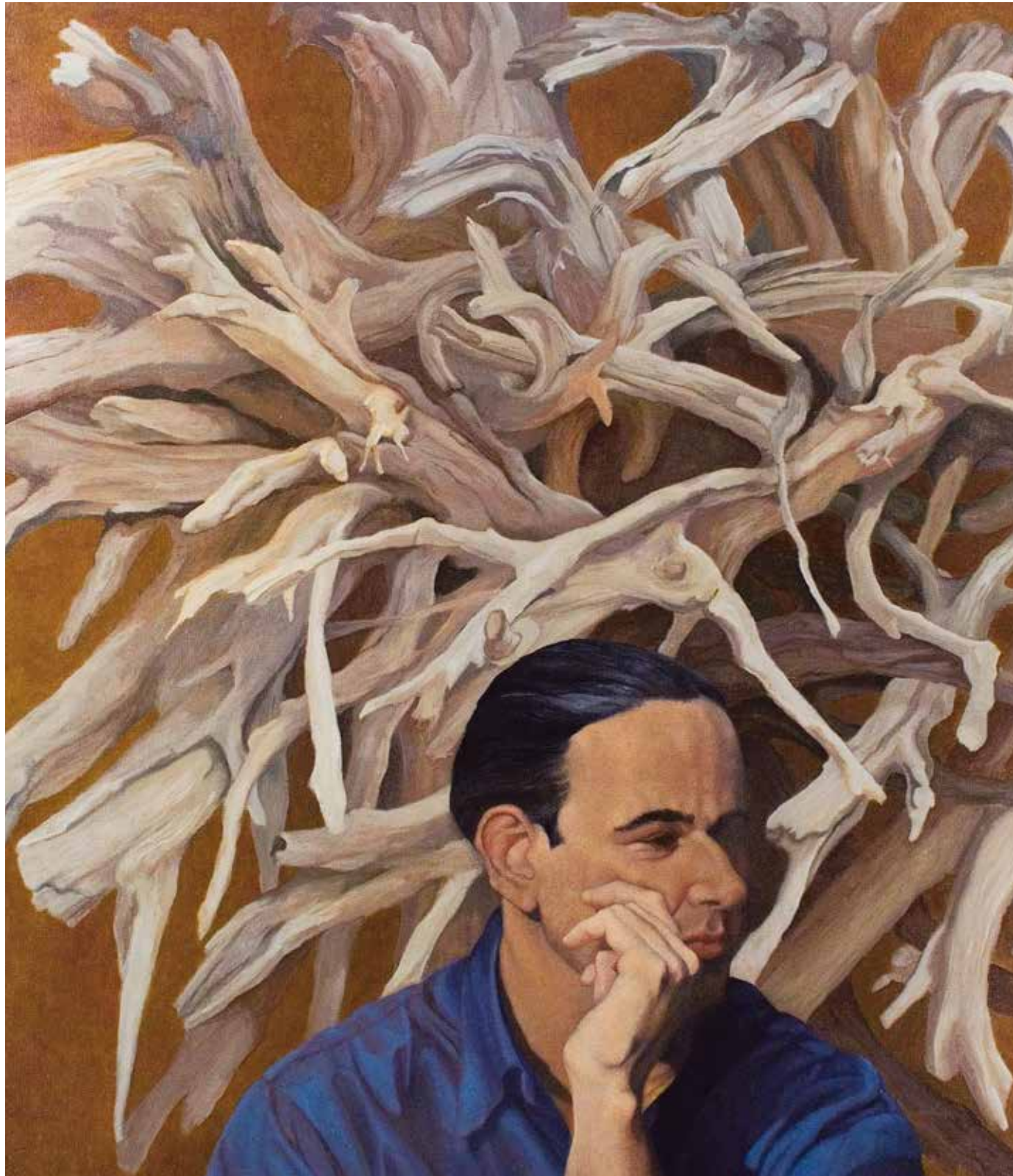
Institute of Arts in 1979, she worked variously in film, graphic design and collage. Periods at New York's School of Visual Arts and Seattle's Gage Academy of Art followed, before completing a masters in figurative painting under Domenic Cretara at California State University. "Under his instruction, not only did I regain faith in my own vision as an artist, but also I witnessed in his work the passion and scholarship required to pursue life as a painter," she says. "Needless to say, this influenced my decision to dedicate these last 15 years as a teaching artist and author."

Suzanne's main ambition is to combine a contemporary approach to paint application with more traditional, atelier-style techniques. She particularly admires the painters of the Barbizon School, such as Camille Corot and

Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña, who worked in the Forest of Fontainebleau in the mid-19th century. "Studying the works of Old Masters is useful if you ask the right questions – for example, if you ask a Cézanne about the power of warm and cool colours to craft space or a Courbet about the effective use of the palette knife, then their works become valuable lessons as well as beautiful paintings."

While Suzanne's books are two of the finest contemporary guides to oil painting, she is still self-critical. "I like to remember that every painting gives us the opportunity to learn what to do better in the next one. If you can find what's not working then you know exactly what to practice."

*The Elements of Landscape Oil Painting* is published in October by Watson-Guption. [www.suzannebrooker.com](http://www.suzannebrooker.com)



**RIGHT** *Portraits of Men, Metaphors of Wood: Doubt*, oil on canvas, 91x81cm  
**OPPOSITE PAGE,**  
**FROM TOP**  
*Fragonard's Tree*, oil on canvas board, 61x45.7cm;  
*Sky Over Water*, oil on canvas, 25x25cm



MASTERCLASS

# PORTRAIT STORIES

A GREAT PORTRAIT SHOULD COMMUNICATE SOMETHING OF THE PERSON BEYOND A MERE LIKENESS.

**MATT JEANES** ATTEMPTS A RARE SELF-PORTRAIT TO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE



## Top tip

SIMPLIFY THE  
BACKGROUND OF  
YOUR PORTRAITS TO  
CREATE A MORE  
CONTEMPORARY  
FINISH





A self-portrait can be a trickier proposition than painting a portrait of someone else. When you paint another person, it is easier to simply paint what you see, but with a self-portrait, the temptation is to try and convey much more about yourself and your personality. Also, if you try to paint yourself in a mirror, you are only seeing the reverse of the real you. Despite regularly painting portraits of other people, it has been 10 years since I last attempted a self-portrait so I thought it was time to set myself the challenge again.

In this demonstration, I will show you how to keep your skin tones clean and how to use masking fluid to create interesting patterns and textures. I will also show you the importance of picking a strong photograph as a starting point.

A good portrait should try to communicate something to the viewer. It should be an interesting image that is more than just the head, shoulders and a smile; it needs to tell a story. This is something that is a little easier to control with a self-portrait.

Begin by thinking about your pose, what you are wearing and what emotion you want to convey. I worked from a photograph so I made sure that the pose and stance was recognisably 'me' before I even looked at the face. Once you are happy that the chosen reference photo or sketch really sums up your style and stance, it is time to begin the portrait.

[www.matthewjeanes.co.uk](http://www.matthewjeanes.co.uk)

## YOU WILL NEED

### • PAINTS

Cadmium Red, Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Scarlet, Cerulean Blue, Antwerp Blue, Prussian Blue, Neutral Tint, Naples Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber, Green Gold, Quinacridone Gold, Sap Green, Indigo, Payne's Grey and Mars Black, all Winsor & Newton Professional Water Colour; Permanent White, Winsor & Newton Designers Gouache

### • PAPER

Fabriano Artistico Acquarello 300gsm cold-pressed watercolour paper, 56x76cm; cartridge paper and tracing paper

### • BRUSHES

ProArte brushes, sizes 1-12; Royal Sovereign Taper Point Colour Shaper

### • PENCILS

A range of Caran d'Ache coloured pencils, various colours

### • MASKING FLUID



## 1 DRAW WITH CARE

I began by creating a drawing on cartridge paper and tracing it onto watercolour paper. I did this to reduce the amount of pencil marks and need for rubbing out that might damage the surface of the better quality watercolour paper. With the drawing in place, I used a colour shaper with Winsor & Newton Clear Masking Fluid to mark out highlights that I wanted to reserve.



## 2 DEFINE A LIKENESS

When starting any portrait, it is always good to pick out a couple of what I call 'likeness pointers' – elements that will identify the subject easily. I began by defining my eyes, hair and stronger shadows using Neutral Tint – this is a good colour to use for the darkest points at this early stage as it won't bleed or contaminate paler colours later.



## 3 PAINT SKIN TONES

Once the Neutral Tint was dry, I added some pale colour washes. Skin tones vary, but I generally find a combination of Naples Yellow, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Scarlet and Burnt Sienna will give a great starting point if lightly mixed and applied in delicate layers. I also echoed the red, yellow and orange tones in the rest of the image with light applications of those colours.



## 4 BUILDING COLOUR

I removed the masking fluid from my hair and painted over the area with Yellow Ochre and Quinacridone Gold. I kept the masking fluid on the other highlights though. I also accentuated the strong shadow areas with Neutral Tint. Concentrating on the face and hair, I used Burnt Umber and Indigo to deepen the colours and some orange and red mixes to bring out the light.





## 5 REFLECT THE SHADOWS

Shadows are generally blue biased but don't be afraid to paint hints of red, purple, green and so on if you see them. Shadows also feature reflected colour – if you are wearing a red top, for example, you may notice a slight reddish reflection on the underside of your face. My reference photo was lit from above with a yellowish light that I suggested here.

## 6 CONSIDER PATTERNS

Turning attention to my clothes, I painted a Green Gold wash on the trousers. My striped top presented an interesting challenge. When painting patterns you can go one of two ways: either a loose impression or a detailed representation. In situations like this, study the lines closely and use them to suggest the contours of the body underneath the fabric.



## 7 WORK WET-IN-WET

For the strap of my bag, I applied a Cadmium Orange wash and then bled a Mars Black wash into it. I released the pressure on the brush a little as I moved up to let the orange layer show through and suggest the required highlight. Always start with the lighter colour when working wet-in-wet like this – starting with black would have muddled the orange.



## 8 INTENSIFY THE TONES

I wanted to deepen the shadows in the folds of the clothes so I applied some more masking fluid to keep the colours that had already dried protected from the subsequent washes. Paying close attention to my reference photo again, I added in some bigger washes of bolder colours here, such as Antwerp Blue, Indigo and Sap Green.





### 9 ADD A BACKGROUND

To avoid the figure 'floating' on the page, I decided to add a suggestive blue wash of colour. I drew a fine line of masking fluid around one side of the figure to protect it and mixed up several pots of rich Indigo, Antwerp Blue and Prussian Blue. I painted clear water on to the area I wanted to be blue and dropped in pure colour. Let this bleed and, if it pools, move it around with a dry brush.



### 10 TIDY UP ROUGH EDGES

When the background was dry, I removed any remaining masking fluid. Removing masking fluid can leave you with slightly rough edges to your shapes and so now is the time to touch up any areas that may need a little extra attention. Painting over the rough lines and blending them a little makes them less obvious without losing the overall shapes.



### 11 TAKE TIME OUT

At this stage, it can often be beneficial to come back to a painting with fresh eyes the next day. This allows you to spot any flaws – things like a lack of symmetry in the face, for example. Adding some subtle coloured pencil marks can help fine tune certain areas too. Don't go too far – you want to define a few key areas and add some much needed focus, without overworking the whole painting.



### 12 FINISHING TOUCHES

I finished by adding highlights to the buttons, sunglasses and other features with the Permanent White gouache, which can really bring a painting to life. Gouache works well over watercolour because it is opaque and sits cleanly on the surface. It also mixes perfectly with watercolour so you can tint the white a little for more subtle highlights.

### Top tip

WITH WET-IN-WET HIGHLIGHTS, LAY DOWN THE LIGHTER COLOUR FIRST AND LET THE DARKER COLOUR BLEED INTO IT



ON TEST

# PIGMENT MARKERS

Winsor & Newton, £4.99 each

STEVE PILL GIVES HIS FIRST VERDICT ON THIS NEW RANGE OF PAINT PENS

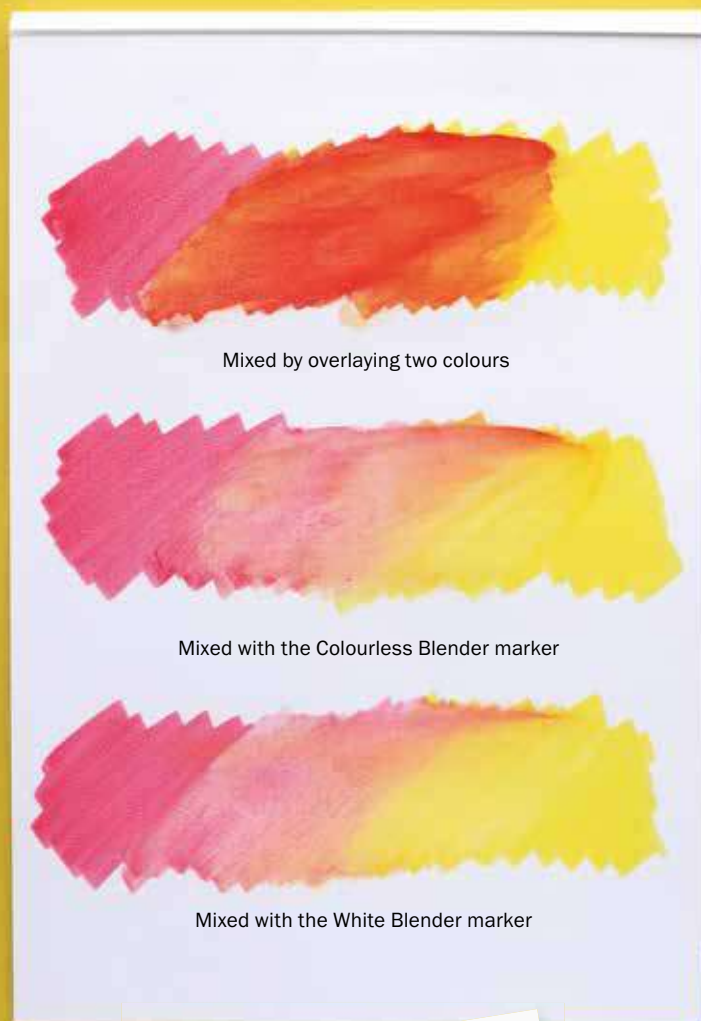
When Winsor & Newton first previewed its new pigment markers range at Frankfurt's Paperworld trade fair in February, the company did so with a level of secrecy and security normally reserved for NASA blueprints or nuclear weapons. Kept behind closed doors, only invited guests could view the products and confidentiality agreements were signed. The message was clear: this is a major launch.

At first glance, it wasn't entirely clear why. Paint pens have been the launch of choice for art manufacturers in recent years, from Liquitex's Paint Markers and Derwent's excellent Line Painter range, to Winsor & Newton's own Water Colour Markers. Where the Pigment Markers are advancing the cause is in terms of the quality of pigment and versatility in the blend.

While we can't verify the claims that the markers' pigment is lightfast for 100 years, the selection of the 107 available colours that we tested were every bit as rich, distinctive and vibrant as one would expect from one of Britain's oldest paint manufacturers. The blending possibilities are equally impressive too. In the photo on the top right you can see our rudimentary attempts at blending. The revolutionary step here is the bottom mix, which was made with the unique White Blender. Whereas the Colourless Blender creates a fluid mix and often soaks up the colour in a manner similar to lifting out watercolour, the White Blender is opaque so leads to a softer, almost chalky transition.

With this in mind, Winsor & Newton's choice of brand ambassadors for the new product is a little misleading. Clearly targeting the younger design and illustration crowd, much of the artwork created is very graphic and street art-influenced. In truth, the natural audience for these markers would appear to be more of a refined lot. It would be fantastic to see how a botanical artist or fashion illustrator might utilise the controlled washes and precise line work that can be wrought from the markers' two nibs, and likewise the portability of the markers and the White Blender's chalky nature could revolutionise an oil painter's sketchbook work.

One note of caution: the samples you see here were all made on Winsor & Newton's 75gsm Smooth Coated Marker Paper, but when we attempted to use the markers on traditional 300gsm hot-pressed watercolour paper, the results were disappointing. Despite being a similarly smooth surface, the vibrancy of the colours was lost and the lines were scratchier, like a felt-tip pen that was running out of ink. This may limit the scope for what is otherwise a very promising new launch.



## Top tip

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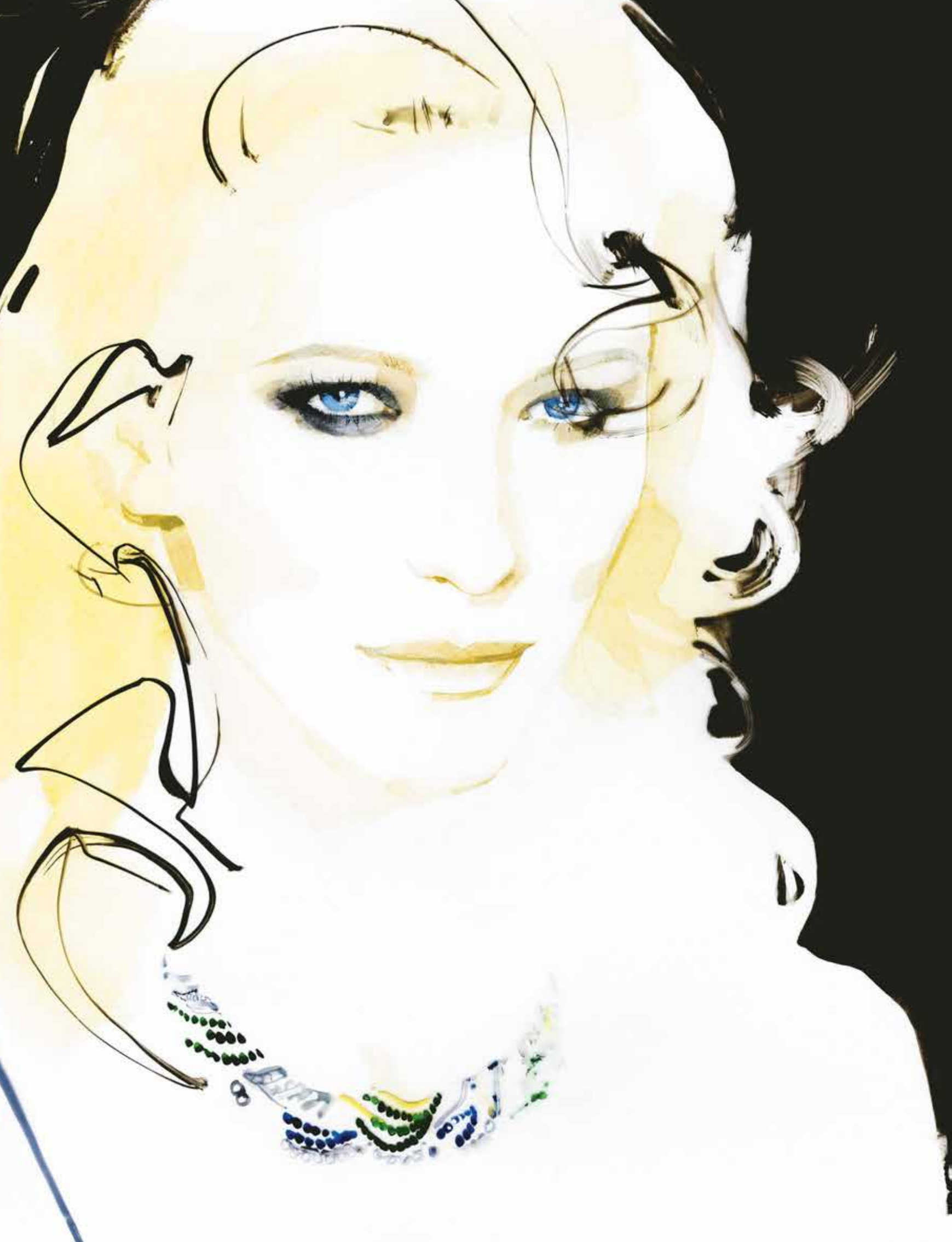
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## What sketching materials would you recommend for a budding fashion illustrator?

Cheap A2 and A3 paper – the more the better. It helps if it's slightly transparent so you can see the previous drawing and incorporate anything good about it into the next one. I use graphite pencils – 6B or 4B – and a brush pen with ink cartridges. I'm not precious about anything when sketching and assume most attempts will fail.

## Should I plan my pictures with sketches or try to work more intuitively?

I plan everything with endless sketches and revisions. When the drawing looks right, I put it on a lightbox and let it guide me towards the final piece. The drawing is the foundation stone. Once I have that, I can afford to let things happen without ever getting lost – I have the map. Controlled spontaneity is the goal.

## What materials would you recommend for when it comes to making a final illustration?

A smooth surface, like the Royal Watercolour Society's 300gsm hot-pressed watercolour paper [made in conjunction with John Purcell Paper], is suitable for most occasions. If you need to show texture or want the brushstrokes to run dry, try Arches Aquarelle 200gsm NOT watercolour paper. I use these with LUKAS Designer's Gouache, Dr. Ph. Martin's inks, Sennelier pastels and lots and lots of black Rotring Drawing Ink.

## What's the key to capturing a good likeness?

Milton Glaser said that getting a likeness is a 'knack' and I agree with him. You need to know what features

TOP LEFT *Jacqueline de Ribes*, 2012

LEFT *Carmen Dell'Orefice*, 2003

OPPOSITE PAGE *Cate Blanchett*, 2009.

All works, mixed media on paper



## How can I decide what details to keep and what to omit?

For me, that is instinct borne out of years of training. I don't like symmetry. I hate parallel lines. I like very fine detail juxtaposed with gestural, barely-controlled mark making. I am interested in the edge of the paper and in negative space. I also want to tell the story of the sitting in a subtle way, so there are a lot of elements at play. Making it look effortless should be the main concern.





## “MUDDYING BRIGHT COLOURS IS A CONTINUAL PROBLEM FOR A FASHION ILLUSTRATOR. ONLY VIGILANCE AND LOTS OF CLEAN WATER CAN SAVE YOU”

and fill in the shape I want. If it bleeds out, I'm happy. It just means I will be more controlled with the next line or mark.

**How do I suggest folds of fabric without having to capture every single one?**

I initially draw them all in, as accurately as I can. Then I select which ones to paint to show what is happening, what the direction is and where the weight falls. Remember, fashion illustration should tell the story of the outfit.

**If I want to add drama with a darker background, how do I prevent the colour from muddying into the brighter shades?**

I work on a coloured paper using oil pastel or pastel for skin tone. I then paint the detail on an acetate overlay. If I want an uneven watercolour effect, I dampen the paper and flash the colour in. These pieces tend to be smaller, around A3 size, as the colour can be difficult to control. Muddying is a continual problem. Only vigilance and lots of clean water can save you.

**LEFT** Michelle Dockery, 2012  
**BELOW** Erin O'Connor, 2002  
**OPPOSITE PAGE** Joan Collins, 2014.  
 All works, mixed media on paper

to emphasise and where in the person's face the key to the likeness lies. I won't say I find it easy – rather, that there are so many things I find more challenging. It just takes practice.

**How can I make my subject's eyes appear more engaging?**

I'm principally known for drawing beautiful women and a lot of their magic is translated by the eye, which can be a tricky subject to depict. I find it helps to emphasise one eye more than the other, which probably harks back to my dislike of symmetry. I don't know why it works for me but it seems to accentuate and pinpoint the focus.

**What's the best way to represent the contrasting textures of different fabrics?**

Let me give you an example. I did an illustration of the model Erin O'Connor in a beautiful headdress [right], which could have been an overwhelming subject. However, I painted the brown feathers in very watered down gouache, using deliberately broad gestures. While still wet, I added definition and direction by using sepia Dr. Ph. Martin's ink direct from the pipette, scratching it onto the surface to contrast with the dream-like quality of Erin's features.

**How can I recreate the look of softer fabrics, such as chiffon or fur?**

Use the wet-in-wet technique, but don't try to control the movement of the paint or ink too much. The chances are the medium will come up with something better than you ever could. I usually paint the shape I want in clear water and then drop the colour in while it is still wet, letting it run







**What are the greatest challenges to overcome when working from life?**

You'll find there's shyness and inhibition on both sides. During sittings I talk and observe as much as I draw – I think of it as gathering raw material for the final portrait. There is an extra tension in that I am often face to face with someone very well known, so inevitably I have preconceptions that mustn't be allowed to inform the drawing. It is a tightrope walk and also a dance. The person opposite you is the drawing.

**Whose artwork would you recommend for further inspiration?**

My main influences are the great 20th-century fashion illustrators René Gruau, Tom Keogh, Marcel Vertès, Carl Erickson, René Bouché, Antonio Lopez and Tony Viramontes. First and foremost, they were true artists, brilliant draughtsmen and masters of line, but their contribution to fashion history is immeasurable.

**David Downton's *Portraits of the World's Most Stylish Women* is published by Laurence King, RRP £40. [www.daviddownton.com](http://www.daviddownton.com)**



# AUTUMN COLOURS

AWARD-WINNING MARINE ARTIST **GARETH BROWN** SHARES NINE TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY IDENTIFY, MIX AND MAINTAIN A RICH PALETTE OF SUITABLY SEASONAL HUES

## 1 DO THE GROUND WORK FIRST

Even if you do the majority of painting in your studio, it helps to interact with your subject in its original context. In my first decade of painting I worked totally *en plein air*.

The experience continues to influence my current work, which involves direct observation of nature. Tones and light are constantly changing, and shadows have colour and depth, which can be lost in even the best of photographs.

## 2 PLOT YOUR MOVES

I begin each work with a basic drawing out of the subject on board, then I block out using thinned paint to lay down the mid to dark tones.

This produces a tonally-faded version of the intended image, which helps to establish the fundamental pattern of the painting as well as the tonal range and balance. Then I gradually progress to the lightest and darkest tones without the distraction of having established the extremes first.

## 3 ALWAYS SEE RED

To achieve the rich burgundy colours you see this time of year, I mix Cadmium Red, Cadmium Red Deep, Crimson Lake and Venetian Red, blending them with Yellow Ochre or Cadmium Yellow (the latter provides brightness if required).

I use Burnt Umber and Ultramarine if I want to adjust the richness or tonal value of the red. The combination of these colours provides the perfect range of reds and oranges required to portray autumnal foliage.



## 4 DOWNSIZE YOUR BRUSHES

When adding details, such as the kernels on corn (as in *Winter Maize*, right), to my block colours, I only ever use smaller sable brushes – the bristles have a softer quality when compared with hog hair or nylon heads.

I'll use anything from a size 3 down to a size 10x0, which is normally used for painting miniatures. I save the hog hair or nylon brushes for blocking out and painting bigger surface areas.



## 5 BUTTER UP YOUR PAINTS

I mix refined linseed oil with my oil paints because I love the buttery consistency that it creates on the brush. Linseed oil increases gloss and is perfect for mimicking the thick, waxy texture of certain types of leaves (see *Rhododendron Leaves*, right).

The flow of the paint allows for the blending of subtle tones and colours, as well as a relatively smooth finish that enhances the detail.







## 6 LOOK THROUGH A LENS

I use photography as a tool to record visual information and capture material from unusual perspectives. A lot of the material I gather is transient, hence a photo will quickly fix the subject matter – I won't lose it, like I could in a breeze or tide.

My *Euphorbia Leaves* series (left), for example, feature leaves from my garden but I wouldn't have been able to paint them from that dynamic aerial perspective without my camera.

## 7 STRIKE A BALANCE

Developing a composition that works across the whole painting can be a challenge because grass and leaves are small subject matter without a specific bold or obvious focus.

The trick is to create a pattern across the painting that works both in terms of both shape and colour. A strong pattern will draw the viewer's eyes in a journey across the painting.

## 8 PUNCH UP YOUR COLOURS

While I try to stay relatively true to my reference image, I do bring my own interpretation to the material and push the saturation of autumnal colours to create a more vibrant image.

Grant yourself a bit of artistic license, but be sure to maintain consistent tonal and colour values across the whole painting to bring a sense of harmony to the picture.



## 9 CONSERVATION IS THE KEY

Oil paintings can take up to six months to dry properly, after which time I will varnish them. Varnishing not only protects the surface of the painting but also reinvigorates the tonal range, especially the darker tones, which may have lost some of their richness during the drying process.

**Gareth's work features in the Royal Society of Marine Artists' Annual Exhibition 2015, which runs from 14-25 October at the Mall Galleries, London SW1.**  
[www.garethbrownartist.co.uk](http://www.garethbrownartist.co.uk)





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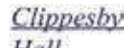
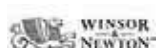
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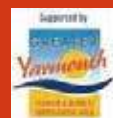
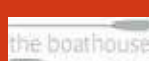
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# A VIEW FROM ABOVE

DEMONSTRATION



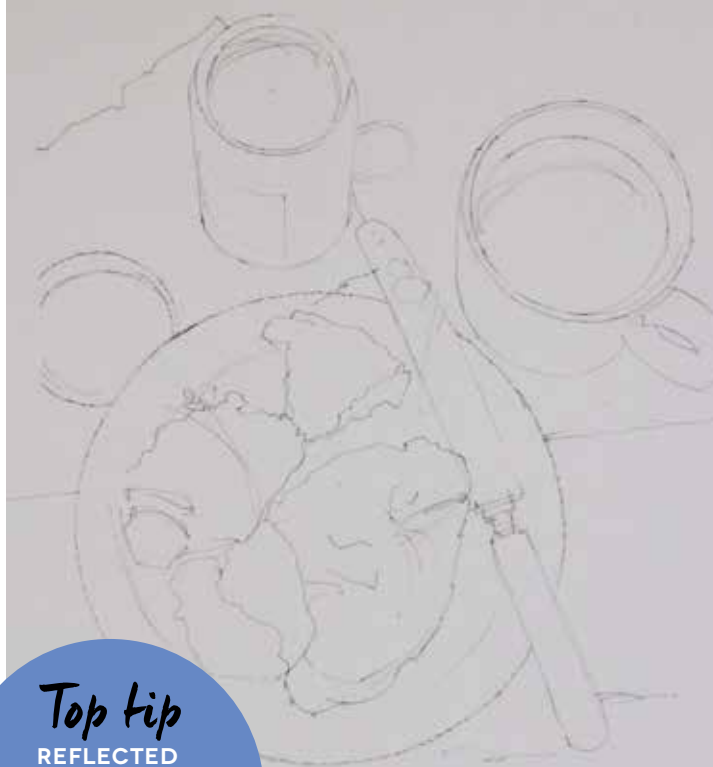
**KEVIN SCULLY** BRINGS A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO A TRADITIONAL STILL LIFE SET-UP

Rather than arranging your objects in a traditional way – that is, lining them up to be viewed at eye level or slightly above – try thinking about more quirky viewpoints. Experiment by pushing the boundaries. If possible, view your composition from above, either directly over the

objects, or at a slight angle. Even mundane objects take on an extra dimension when seen from an elevated position. A slightly more abstract painting can be produced when thinking outside the box. When setting out your objects, try to think of a way to entice the viewer's eye into the picture. >



1



*Top tip*

REFLECTED  
COLOURS HELP TO  
TIE A STILL LIFE  
COMPOSITION  
TOGETHER

2



3



4



## KEVIN'S MATERIALS

- Permanent White, Raw Sienna, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Orange, Burnt Sienna, Cobalt Blue and Lamp Black gouache
- Bockingford 190gsm NOT watercolour paper
- Size 1, 3 and 7 Kolinsky sable brushes, a wide hake brush and a size 10 square flat brush

**1** Some old pine boards were laid on the floor and the objects were moved around on them until a satisfactory composition was arrived at, to create the impression that the objects had been placed on a pine table for breakfast. The easel was positioned so that the viewpoint was from directly above the main focus points of the picture, which were the croissant, knife and marmalade on the plate. The lighting was directed from above and slightly behind, so that it shone through the semi-translucent marmalade in the glass jar.

The plate was drawn with a compass, but because the other objects were further away they weren't seen as circles but instead as ellipses. These were drawn carefully by eye. The ellipses on the mug are at a slight angle and leaning over to the right, as opposed to those on the marmalade jar. Because the jar is almost directly in front of the viewer, the ellipses are horizontal. On the left of the plate the ellipses on the lid of the jar lean a little in the opposite direction.

**2** The background and individual items were laid in with a wash of their local colours, and with the suggestion of shadows in places. No attempt was made to produce nice, smooth blends, as ultimately nearly everything was going to be painted in fairly opaque colour. A few areas of white paper were left untouched, as these were to be highlights or just areas very pale in colour.

For the time being the marmalade was kept as thin washes in an attempt to retain its semi-transparent nature. The complicated surface of the crusty, golden croissant was built up slowly with layers of thin washes consisting of various amounts of Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Orange, Raw

Sienna and Burnt Sienna. The reflections on the knife blade were painted with Cobalt Blue, Lamp Black and Permanent White, and the bone handle with a thin wash of Raw Sienna.

**3** The joints of the pine boards and some areas of deep shadow were painted with a mixture of Burnt Sienna and Lamp Black. These wouldn't normally have been painted so dark at such an early stage in the painting, but at some point the strength of the shadows has to be determined in order to judge how dark or light to make the other areas.

More colour was added to the boards with sweeping horizontal brushstrokes and the croissant, knife and jar of marmalade were painted with a bit more detail.

More intense colours were introduced into the croissant and the plate, and the shadows on it were painted with a more opaque mixture of Cobalt Blue, Lamp Black and Permanent White. A few highlights were added using Cadmium Yellow Light and Permanent White.

**4** Although the mug was actually a dark red, it had a white star on its side, which appeared as blue because of the surrounding colours reflected onto it. So for the time being the mug was painted a darker blue that was closer to the actual tone of the star.

The polka-dot material was painted in an opaque red, and the shadows in the fold, together with that created by the jar, were painted a darker red. The lines of white spots were drawn in pencil, taking care to follow the form of the cloth where it curved.

The grain in the wood was painted in more detail, introducing some of the colours evident in the rest of the picture. The tea was painted with a mixture of Burnt Sienna and Permanent White, including the shadow. For the inside of the cup, Raw Sienna and Permanent White were used with more white being added to the area near the handle where it received more light. This same colour was used for the highlight on the tea.

The top edge of the mug was painted in almost pure white, adulterated with a little nondescript colour from the palette. The shadow below the mug now looked too dark,



so a semi-opaque wash of the mug's colour was painted over it to indicate some reflection.

**5** The knife's blade was painted with a bit more care and some colour was added to the handle to indicate its curved form. The lid was painted in more detail and the slightly wobbly ellipse was adjusted.

The marmalade in the jar was given some richer colour containing Cadmium Orange and Cadmium Red, while still trying to retain its translucency. Some lighter spots were added on the side of the jar to show the polka dots reflected from the cloth. The remaining polka dots were now added and some lettering was indicated on the label.

Some further tidying and sharpening up of the details and the painting was complete.

This is an edited extract from Kevin Scully's *Painting Still Life in Gouache*, published by Crowood Press, RRP £16.99. [www.crowood.com](http://www.crowood.com)





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PROJECT

# PAINTING *Skies*

ARCHITECT TURNED ARTIST **DAVID HOLLIS** OFFERS PRACTICAL TIPS FOR RECREATING A RANGE OF SKIES IN WATERCOLOUR



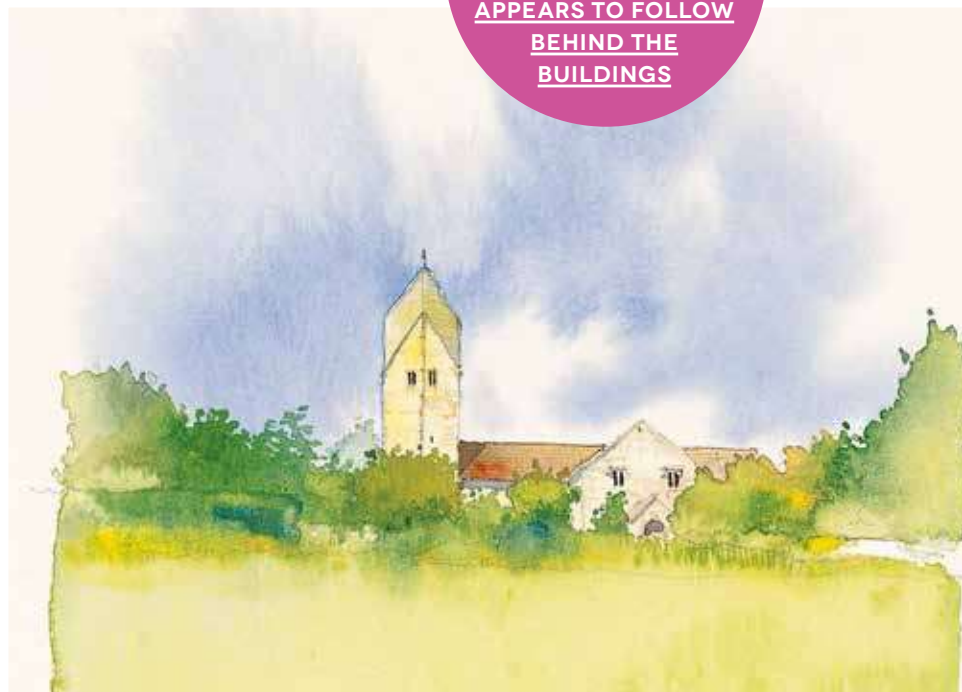
Wash taken through at the trees but stopped at the building

## *Top tip*

PLACE YOUR FIRST WASH CAREFULLY SO THAT THE BLUE SKY APPEARS TO FOLLOW BEHIND THE BUILDINGS

## CLOUDY SKIES

For this lesson we look at using wet-in-wet techniques to create cloudy skies. The key to producing convincing skies lies in an ability to form the fine detail of the wisps of cloud as it blends into the blue of the sky. By using a wet-in-wet wash it is possible to achieve this with very little effort. When painting the blue skies in the temperate areas of the globe, it is best to mix the wash using French Ultramarine alone. For painting skies in subtropical areas, use French Ultramarine mixed with Prussian Blue to produce an accurate colour. The area of the sky needs to be thoroughly wetted. The blue of the sky is then introduced to about one-third of the area in a random way. The paint spreads into the wetted surface producing cloudlike fronds as shown. The clouds are the untouched areas of white paper.







In this example, the wet-in-wet sky wash was taken across the entire page with the exception of the buildings and the boats

This technique can be extended to produce dark, menacing skies. Three wash mixtures are required: a French Ultramarine wash, a Light Red wash, and one that mixes the two colours to make grey. The sky area is wetted and the French Ultramarine and grey washes are applied in a random way. Small patches of the Light Red wash are then introduced and the brush is used to help mix them on the paper. The colours tend to granulate, producing texture within the colour. This is caused by the pigment settling into the shallow hollows in the paper. The texturing helps give the impression of heavy clouds.

## BLUE SKIES

Although the project featured in this lesson uses wet-in-wet to depict a wild and dark sky, it is often necessary to depict blue skies. When you look at blue sky in real life you find that there is a natural gradation in the sky. In moving your eye toward the horizon, the relatively deep blue of the sky tends to become lighter in colour. As an artist you need to reflect this in your approach.

If you stop a sky wash at the horizon it becomes too easy to create small areas of white between the washes for the sky and the land or sea. You will find that small areas of white like this detract from the finished picture. Using a gradated wash, which is relatively light at the horizon, allows you to take the sky wash through the horizon and then overlay it with washes for the land or sea. This avoids a 'join' between the washes.



## MORNING AND EVENING SKIES

Effective morning and evening skies can be created by using variegated wash techniques based on two colours blended while they are wet. In the example shown the wash was based on a muted yellow mixture of Aureolin and Yellow Ochre at the top and a violet-grey mixture of French Ultramarine, Permanent Rose and Light Red at the bottom. The sky wash was taken through the horizon, and the sun, which is the brightest object within the painting, was left as the white of the paper, although a little of the violet-grey wash was touched into the sun area to create the impression of clouds passing in front. After the sky wash had completely dried, the area of the sun was rewetted and some of the colour was 'lifted out' using a tissue as blotting paper. This softened the cloud in front of the sun.



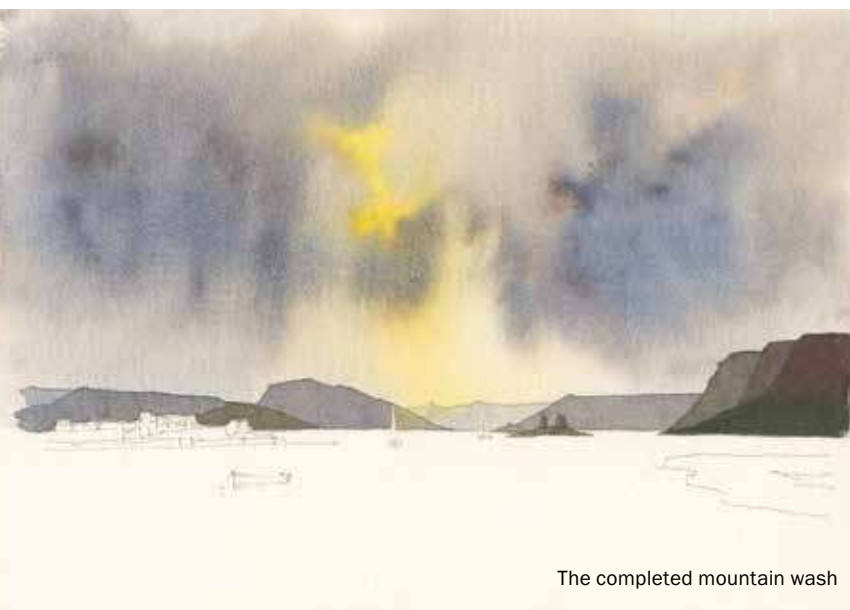




The pencil sketch and sky wash



The initial mountain wash



The completed mountain wash



The sea wash

## CREATING A BROODING SKY

To begin this project, prepare an outline of the main elements in pencil, using the finished watercolour on page 67 as the basis. Where there is a clear horizon with the sea, it is always important to ensure that it is straight and level and, although the use of a straight edge is not generally recommended, this is one instance where it can be useful. The details of the village houses need only to be suggested. Once the sketch is in place the sky wash can be applied using wet-in-wet techniques. The aim is to create an impression of the dramatic skies that can occur when heavy and thundery clouds are moving across the sky. The sun frequently becomes hidden behind the clouds, creating bright areas of sky, which can then take on an incandescent yellow appearance.

The first task is to wet the area of the sky and mountains, leaving clear the buildings and boat masts. The washes are made of varying mixes of French Ultramarine and Light Red for the grey clouds, and mixtures of Aureolin with a little Yellow Ochre for the background sky. These should be

applied to the wetted areas of the paper and the colour allowed to bleed across the surface. The central area of yellow should be applied first and then the clouds. The area near the horizon should be left as light as possible for dramatic effect. If the colour moves in unexpected ways, some control can be applied by tilting the paper.

Once the sky wash is dry, washes can be applied to the mountains. To create an illusion of distance, the furthest mountain should be the bluest and the lightest in colour. An initial blue-grey wash mixed with French Ultramarine and Light Red should be used to cover all the mountain areas. When dry, further washes with more light red can be applied over the middle distance and closer mountains. Finally, variegated washes of varying amounts of the violet-grey colour mixed with a little Aureolin should be applied to the closest mountain areas and the island. The buildings and boats are left clear of colour at this stage so that they contrast with the dark tones of the mountains.

The sea is probably the most difficult part of the watercolour. The intensity of the glare from its surface



demands that the sea near the horizon is left totally white, creating the stark contrast with the mountains. A wet-in-wet wash is used, with colour kept clear of the far distance. The principal colour is Aureolin, with watered-down versions of the washes used for the sky added to the foreground.

The edge of a folded tissue is placed on the wet surface of the sea wash to lift out some of the colour and produce white lines across the wash. These are to imitate waves in the foreground. Aureolin mixed with Yellow Ochre is then used to create thin straight lines across the foreground to reinforce the appearance of small waves.

The key elements of the watercolour are now in place but it still has an unfinished look. The foreground rocks and the detail of the village need to be added. The grey roofs are painted with a French Ultramarine and Light Red wash, which has a little aureolin added. Shadow is also provided using a French Ultramarine and Light Red wash, and the dark windows of the houses are created with an almost black mixture of the strongest possible mix of these two colours. Much of the cottages should remain white to create the contrast with the mountains. The green and Yellow Ochre of the land around the houses should also be added and some shadow applied to the boats.

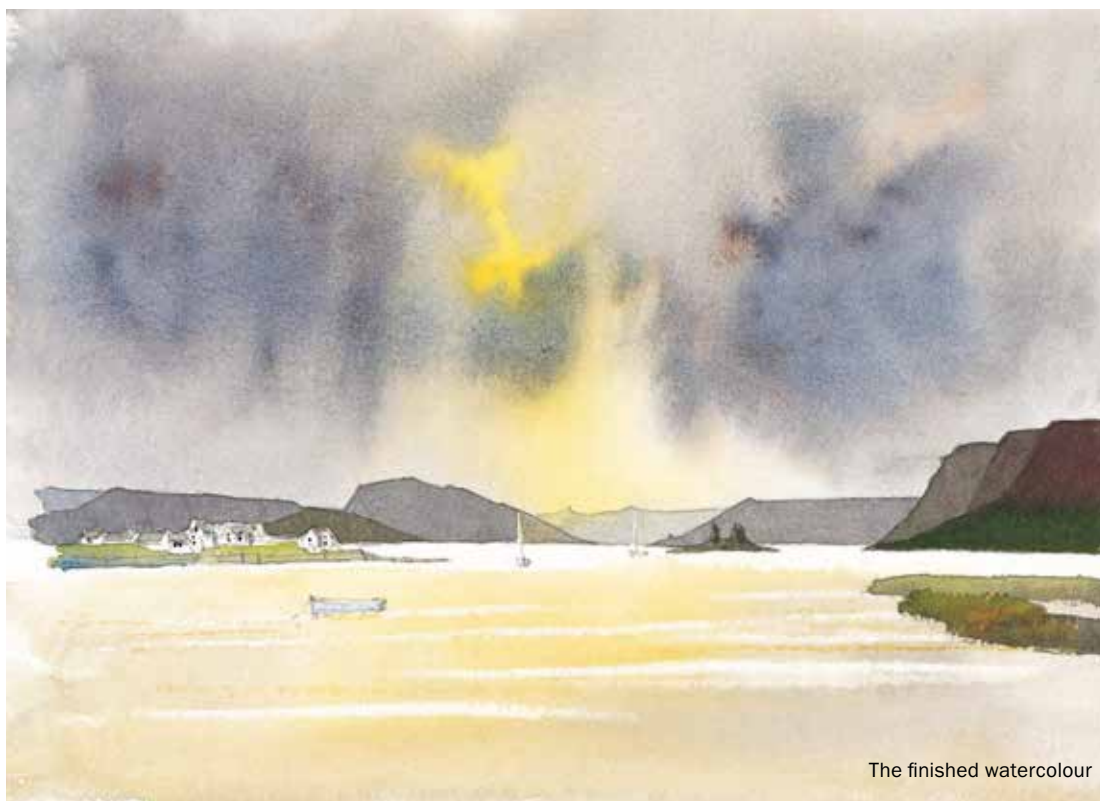
The foreground rocks should now be added and then the waves improved to complete the watercolour. The white areas of the small waves can be extended by scratching the surface of the watercolour with a sharp knife. This produces the feathered edges typical of waves. The method can also be used effectively around the base of the foreground rocks and the rowboat in the middle distance.

**This is an extract from *Practical Landscape Painting* by David Hollis, published by Ivy Press, £7.99. [www.ivypress.co.uk](http://www.ivypress.co.uk)**



Scratch the surface with a knife to extend the white areas

**Top tip**  
WASHES ALWAYS  
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YOU WOULD EXPECT.  
TEST THEM OUT  
FIRST ON SCRAPS  
OF PAPER



The finished watercolour

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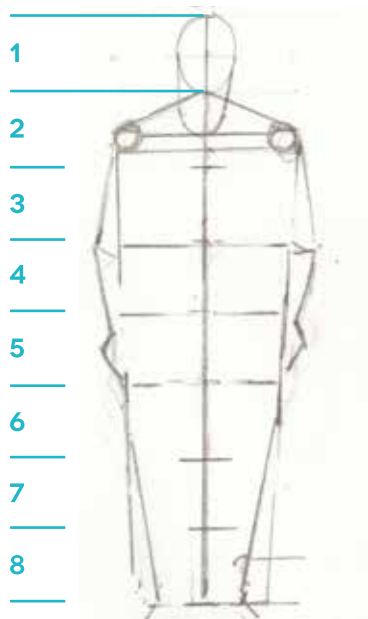
# FIGURES IN A SCENE

ADDING PEOPLE TO A LANDSCAPE OR CITYSCAPE CAN BRING COMPLEXITY AND DEPTH TO YOUR OVERALL COMPOSITION, SAYS ARTIST **HAZEL LALE**

**W**hether the central theme or a secondary idea, figures can add complexity and depth to a composition. It is always a good idea to practice your figures before adding them to a scene and plan out carefully where to include them. Keep it simple. For a more suggestive painting, treat figures as silhouettes with no obvious facial features and unresolved feet. Draw what you see, not what you think you can see. Consider the whole composition and what it requires.

## HEAD

The head is perhaps the most important part of the human body as it can be used as a unit of measurement for the rest of the figure. In the average standing figure, there are between seven and eight head lengths. This unit of measurement can be used to map out other parts of the body – for example, the widest part of the shoulders of a forward-facing figure is approximately three heads wide.



## NECK AND SHOULDERS

There is a good reason why we have triangular coat hangers in our wardrobes – the shape mirrors our shoulder line. For more accurate figures, always remember to draw the neck as a triangle. The first point of the triangle should sit approximately on the centre of the chin, the second and third points on the bony parts of each shoulder.

## ARMS

Arms should be drawn from the shoulder, with the elbows to the waist and the hands resting on the middle of the thigh. Take care to avoid the arms becoming totally unrelated to the standing figure – they should be treated as an integral part of the body that only becomes animated as the figure starts to move. Hands are extensions of the arm – try to only draw what you see, not what is imagined.



## LEGS

Small figures can be used to animate a scene or give depth to it, and legs are a great way to indicate movement. Remember that legs move independently of each other and one foot should not necessarily always be directly in front of the other. Also, remember to draw space between the legs to create stability and avoid simplifying them to a carrot shape.

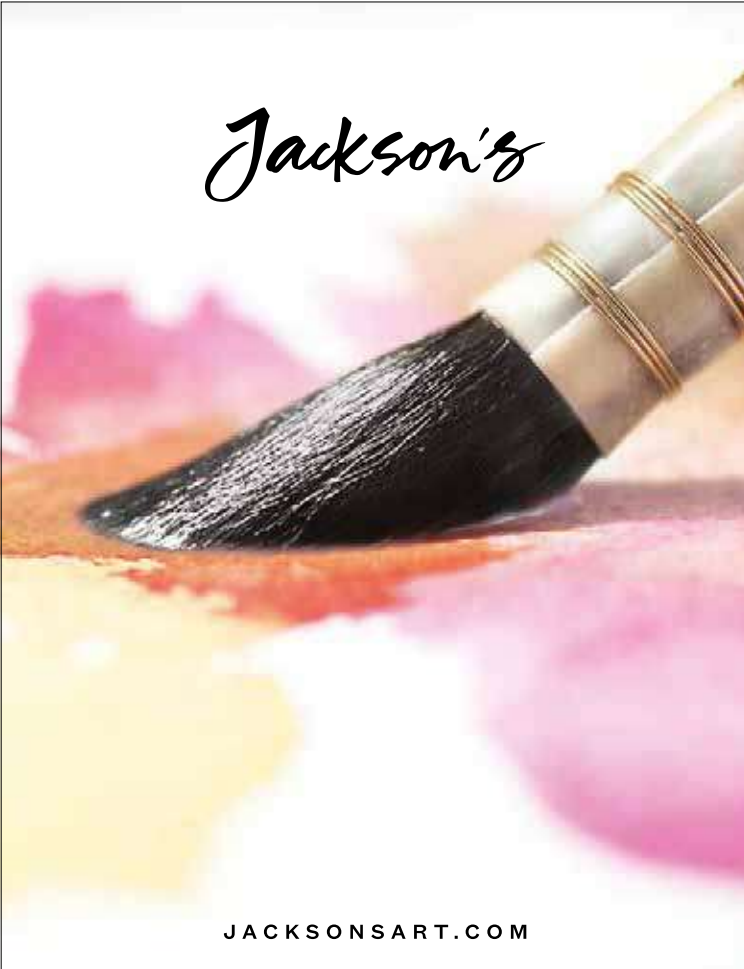
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*Top tip*

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THE BIGGER PICTURE

## 2. CREATING HARMONY

IN **RAY BALKWILL'S** SECOND ARTICLE ON THE BUILDING BLOCKS REQUIRED TO MAKE GREAT PAINTINGS, HE SHOWS YOU HOW TO ESTABLISH A COHERENT MOOD

### COLOURED SUPPORT

"The warmth of the pink pastel paper shows through the transparent washes, imparting a luminosity to the cool blue sky."

### RICH ACCENTS

"I mixed a blue watercolour wash with Permanent White gouache to add sparkling, complementary accents."



#### SUBTLE BLENDS

"Blended, wet-in-wet washes help create a greater sense of unity."



## Top tip

**TO CAPTURE ATMOSPHERE SUCCESSFULLY, TRY RESTRICTING YOURSELF TO A LIMITED RANGE OF TONES AND A LIMITED PALETTE TOO – PERHAPS JUST SIX COLOURS**

Harmony in a painting involves being gentle on the eye and establishing a mood. I can think of no better medium for achieving this than watercolour with its subtle properties of delicacy and translucency. The major element that creates harmony in a painting is colour. Selecting hues that lie together on the colour wheel or establishing a dominant hue through tonal contrasts is a good way of providing mood and atmosphere.

#### ADD MOOD IN GOUACHE

This painting of a rain shower over the Haldon Hills in Devon is what I rather grandly call a 'location study' – a colour sketch made on location as reference for a studio painting. The photo above shows the scene as it was, but as you can see I rearranged the position of the boats.

Although watercolours were mainly used, I also added some gouache. Unlike watercolour, gouache is opaque – hence its other name: 'body colour'. Used straight from the tube, gouache gives a dense covering and adds depth, but when thinned with water it has a semi-opaque, almost milky quality that is also ideal for creating atmospheric effects, particularly on a coloured support. After creating the painting with a limited palette, I added details in a Permanent White gouache that I tinted with watercolour.

#### PICK A MOTHER COLOUR

When working on location, I look to find the most dominant colour in the scene, which I often refer to as the 'mother colour'. I also look to see if the overall colour temperature of the scene is warm or cool.

The choice of colour of the paper plays an integral part in the picture, so choose a paper that approximates to the tone and colour of your subject.

Working on a coloured support adds an extra unifying element to your painting. Not only does the paper's colour peep through the subsequent layers of paint, but also one can get away with putting fewer marks on the paper, which ultimately gives a greater spontaneity to the finished painting. Immediacy, of course, is one of the beauties of watercolour as it invites a more direct and spontaneous response from the viewer.

For this painting, I used a sheet of Canson Mi-Teintes pastel paper in a colour called Moonstone, which is a soft, warm pink. I prefer to use the reverse side of the paper, which is less textured and because the paper is lightweight, I stretch this onto a board with gummed brown tape.

#### WORK THE WHOLE

The temptation can be to work on one small area of a painting until it is complete, before moving onto the next. Doing so can lead to a rather confused painting because each colour is often unrelated. It is much better if one can learn to see the whole picture and work on all areas of the composition at once. It is important to keep your eyes moving around the subject, comparing one colour against another, and assessing each tone against its neighbour. Echoing colours within the painting also helps achieve this, so when you have a colour on your brush ask yourself: where else can I use it? In this way your painting will develop and emerge as a more homogeneous mass of colour and tone.

Although you may not use harmony as much as other principles as you paint, it's easy to understand and worth knowing about. As Paul Cézanne once said: "When paintings are done right, harmony appears by itself".

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ABOVE Shower over the Haldon Hills, watercolour on paper, 25x36cm



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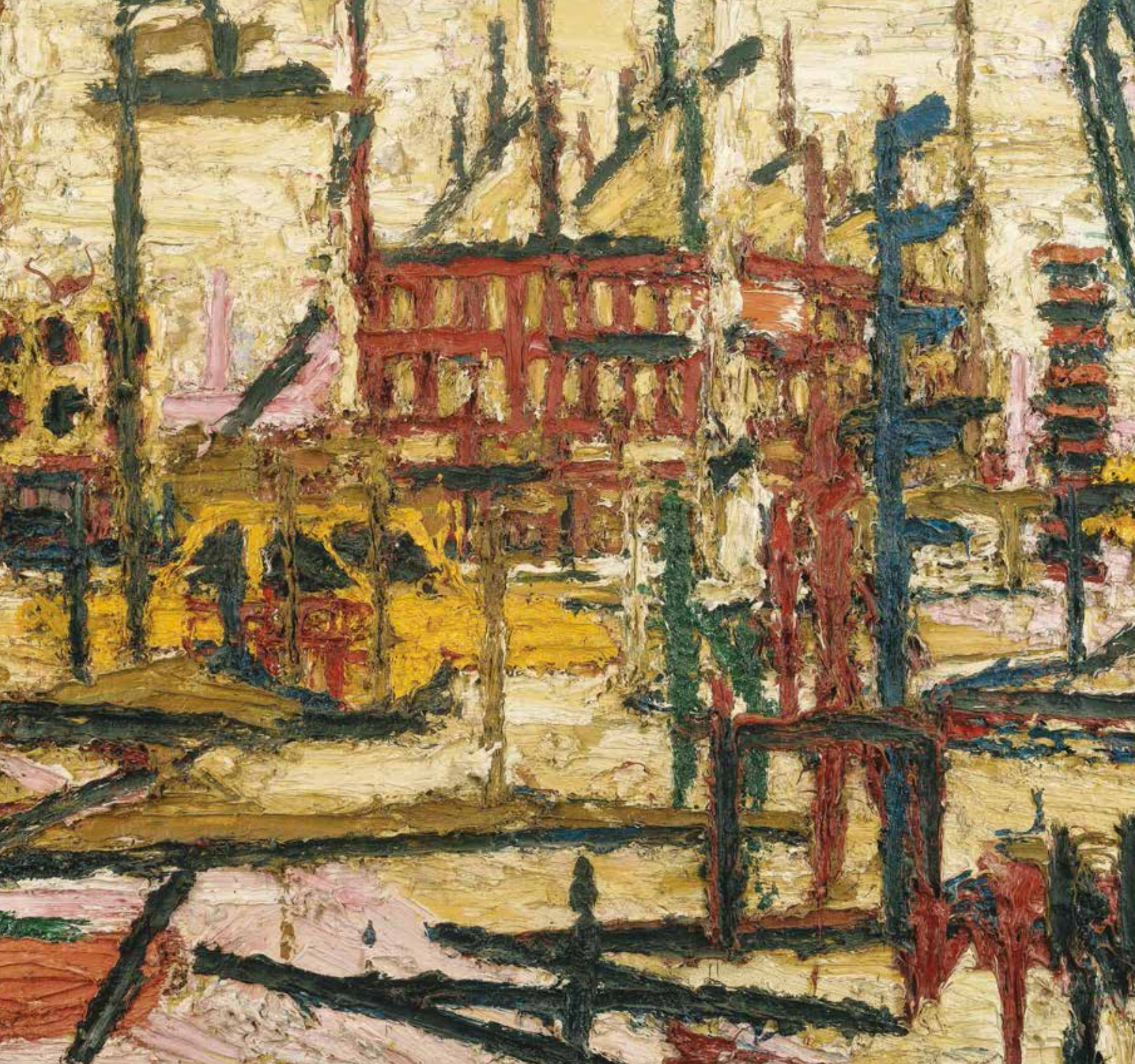


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# A CELEBRATION OF PAINT

FRANK AUERBACH'S RICH, IMPASTO OILS REVEL IN THE VERY MEDIUM OF PAINT. FELLOW ARTIST **ADÈLE WAGSTAFF** DISCOVERS HOW FAMILIAR SUBJECTS AND BOLD REVISIONS ARE THE KEYS TO UNLOCKING HIS TECHNIQUE





This autumn, Tate Britain will stage a major retrospective of the work of British painter Frank Auerbach, bringing together around 70 drawings and paintings from the 1950s through to the present day.

Auerbach's heavy and impasto application of paint is immediately recognisable; his paintings are wonderfully tactile. Born in Berlin in 1931, Auerbach arrived in England in 1939 as a refugee and he has lived and worked in London ever since, based in the same studio in Camden Town for more than 60 years. He is part of the generation of leading British figurative painters that became known as the 'School of London' and included the likes of Lucian Freud, Michael Andrews and Francis Bacon.

Auerbach's uncompromising portraits of people and the urban landscape have been the artist's preoccupation now

## DEVELOPING A FAMILIARITY WITH YOUR SUBJECT CAN MAKE YOU MORE FOCUSED ON OBSERVING CHANGES IN LIGHTING, MOOD OR POSITION

for six decades. He is known to work almost every single day of the year, repeatedly applying the same intense scrutiny and gaze to a certain view of the city (in particular the area immediately surrounding his studio in North London) or the same model's head.

During a recorded conversation in 1978 with Catherine Lampert, a sitter and now curator of the Tate Britain exhibition, Frank Auerbach discussed how the familiarity





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**ABOVE** *Mornington Crescent*, 1965, oil on board, 101.6x127cm

**RIGHT** *E.O.W. half-length nude*, 1958, oil on board, 76.2x50.8cm

**PAGE 73**  
*Hampstead Road, High Summer*, 2010, oil on board, 56.2x56.2cm

of working with models that he knows very well, or from landscapes within his immediate vicinity, allows him to take more liberties with subjects as he knows them intimately.

Auerbach's portraits trace his close relationships with a very small number of models, each demonstrating an incredible dedication to the painter by sitting week after week, year after year. Of this small group of sitters made up from friends and family, they have sat for anything up to 56 years. Each sitter returns to the artist's studio on the same day of each week, some will sit more than once a week. This, they do every week of the year without fail, making sure that, for however many months or years it takes to finalise a single painting, the same shirt or outfit is worn.

Developing a familiarity with his subjects is an important part of Auerbach's success as it really heightens his engagement with them. Whether you are looking at the landscape in varying weather conditions or working with a model on a regular basis, such repetition can make you more focused on observing changes in lighting, mood or position.

### MAKING REVISIONS

As Frank Auerbach's models have been working with him over such long periods, they are the best witnesses to the reclusive artist's practice, as they have observed during each sitting how colour is mixed, paint is applied, then duly scraped off. His sitters have described how huge blobs and lumps of paint build on the canvas, creating an encrusted surface onto which individual marks are dragged and scraped. Paint is applied with great vigour, appearing as if thrown onto the surface. All the information within the frame is an essential part of the painting, with equal attention being given to the background, chair or head.

Auerbach's working process is demonstrated in the series of photographs of *Portrait of Sandra*, taken by the sitter Sandra Fisher following each sitting. Forty of the 42 sittings were documented in this way and it is fascinating to see the extent of revision and change from one sitting to the next. The drawing is erased and re-drawn; the information from the previous sitting accumulates with the next, creating an underlying tension within the image. In a number of Auerbach's drawings, you can see where he has had to patch the paper in order to continue working, as the surface has been erased so often that it has worn through.

With the artist's process of constant revisions, it means that when we look at one of his finished works, almost every visible stroke of paint or charcoal was likely applied during the very last sitting. Look closer and you really do get the feeling that he is wrestling with the paint on the surface. Auerbach's is a totally unique way of looking at reality: scrutinising with colour and texture, as the paint becomes a three-dimensional surface. His early paintings were executed using a sombre palette of earth colours, chosen largely because they were the cheapest pigments that were available to him at the time.

Over the years, Auerbach's paintings have become brighter as more expensive pigments were added to his

palette. More colour begins to be introduced in paintings such as 1958's *E.O.W. half-length nude*. By the 1970s, the resulting palette was rich and vivid, filled with pure reds, greens, oranges and yellows.

As Auerbach has painted the same people repeatedly over a long period, a new painting of each individual sitter will begin with an idea – this might be about the tonality of the work, or an angle of the head. The artist has previously commented that it isn't always possible to tell where the interest is going to lie within a new work until the painting begins to develop over time. In a simple painting of the head, the main interest may not be the eyes or nose, but a particular angle or way light touches a part of the surface.

### PAINTING PROCESS

Catherine Lampert has been modelling for Auerbach every week for 37 years. In *To The Studio*, a 2001 film directed by Frank's son Jake Auerbach, she described the artist's process of beginning each new painting. Auerbach, she reveals, uses a very loaded brush to cover the entire surface of the canvas with a layer of paint within the first 15 minutes of the sitting. During each two-hour session, >

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paint is then 'catapulted' onto the surface and drawn into directly with a great immediacy and energy. From the very first session, the process of removing paint has also begun.

Removing the paint is just as important to Auerbach's process as the application of it. At times, the paint is scraped back so much that only a stain of colour remains on the surface before the process of adding and subtracting begins once again during the following sitting. The energy and speed of his paint application can be seen in pictures such as *Hampstead Road*, *High Summer*, in which broad, loaded brushstrokes zigzag across the canvas's surface.

As a painter, I have always admired the richly built-up surfaces of Auerbach's paintings, which have been applied with a frenzy of brushstrokes, and the intensity of his drawings resulting from a furious and direct mark making. Both his drawings and paintings are realised from intense observation, from many months or years of work to reveal the very essence of his subjects.

If you are keen to try working in a similar way with thick, impasto layers of oils or acrylics, consider working with a palette knife – perfect for loading on the paint and scraping

## REMOVING THE PAINT IS AS IMPORTANT TO AUERBACH'S PROCESS AS THE APPLICATION... IT IS SCRAPED BACK SO ONLY A STAIN OF COLOUR REMAINS

it away. The best brushes for impasto work are flat-headed ones with thick, stiff bristles. Be sure to use the paint without much in the way of thinners, mediums or turpentine for the most luscious results.

Across a lengthy career, Auerbach's paint application technique has been incredibly varied, as he uses different brushes as well as his fingers to scrape the surface and sometimes blots the paint with newsprint. Most importantly, he does so with confidence, without a fear of destroying the image or scraping back something that he has spent hours on in order to move forward.

Adele's latest book, *Painting the Nude in Oils*, is published by Crowood Press, £16.99. Frank Auerbach runs from 9 October to 13 March 2016 at Tate Britain, London SW1. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

**ABOVE** *Reclining Head of Julia II*, 1997, acrylic on board, 54.6x68.5cm

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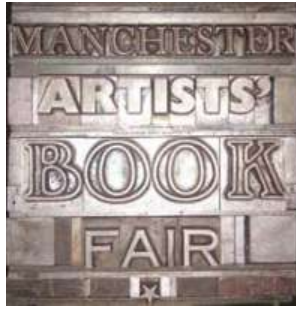
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## MY FAVOURITE THINGS

# Loyd GROSSMAN

TV PRESENTER, SAUCIER, AUTHOR, MUSICIAN AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE ROYAL DRAWING SCHOOL

### MY FAVOURITE PAINTING

Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe* is thrilling and continues to fascinate. He was very much overshadowed by Reynolds and Gainsborough.

### MY DRAUGHTSMAN INSPIRATION

I am delighted that people are rediscovering the value of drawing skills. Leonardo could draw, but I'm most inspired by the work of the young people at the Royal Drawing School (1).

### MY FAVOURITE PERIOD OF ART

The 18th century was my *Celebrity Mastermind* specialist subject. Sometimes it looks placid and elegant, but it was a period of extraordinary turmoil as people struggled to cope with the huge intellectual, social and economic changes that were taking place.

### MY TOP ART BIOGRAPHY

John Richardson's *A Life of Picasso* (2) remains a great read. It's a monument of diligent research and illuminating insight.

### MY LAST FAVOURITE EXHIBITION

*Van Gogh + Munch* (3) at the Munch Museum in Oslo is one of the best shows I've seen this year. It clearly but subtly highlighted the many parallels between two great artists who appear to be so different.

### MY TV ART HIGHLIGHT

For whatever faults it has, Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation* remains TV's greatest attempt to say something important about art.

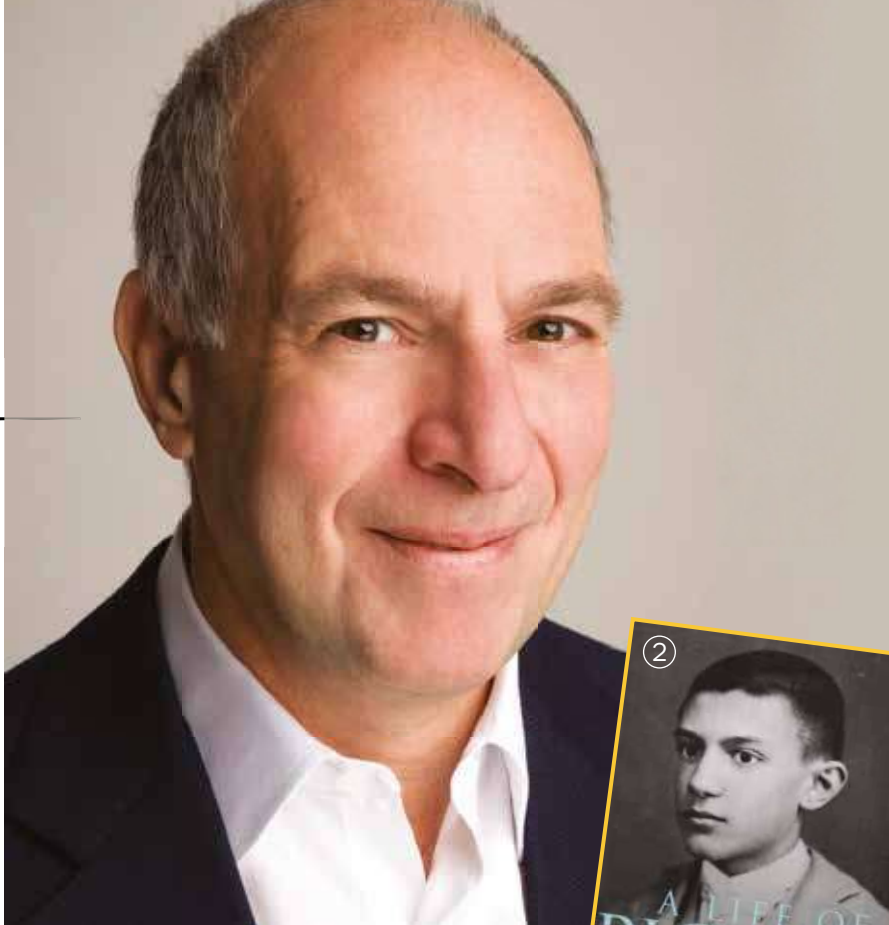
### MY FAVOURITE LP COVER ARTIST

I always admired the late Storm Thorgerson. He is best known for designing Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* (4) [illustrated by George Hardie] but he was the creator of many other great covers.

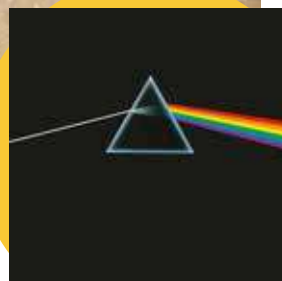
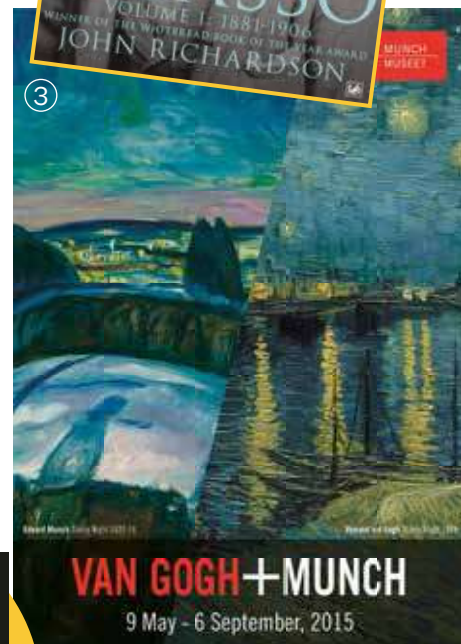
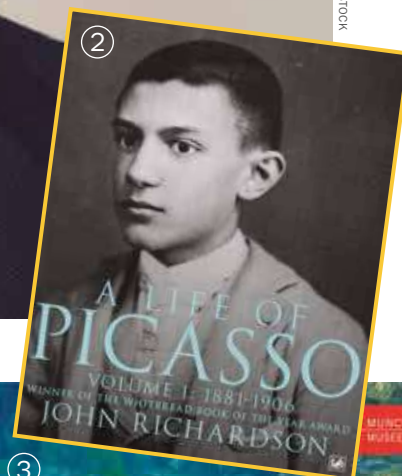
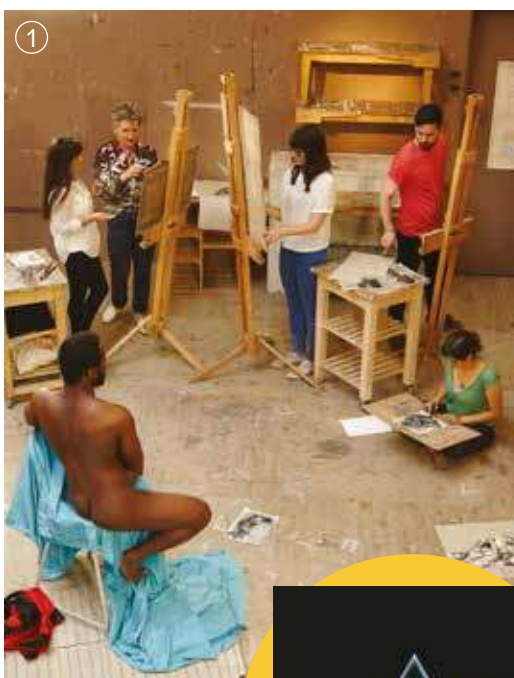
### MY ART DESTINATION OF CHOICE

I spend a lot of time in Rome (5). There seems to be plenty of art to discover everywhere, but I'm especially keen on Italian churches.

Loyd's new book, *Benjamin West and the Struggle to be Modern*, is published on 8 October by Merrell Publishers, RRP £35. [www.merrellpublishers.com](http://www.merrellpublishers.com)

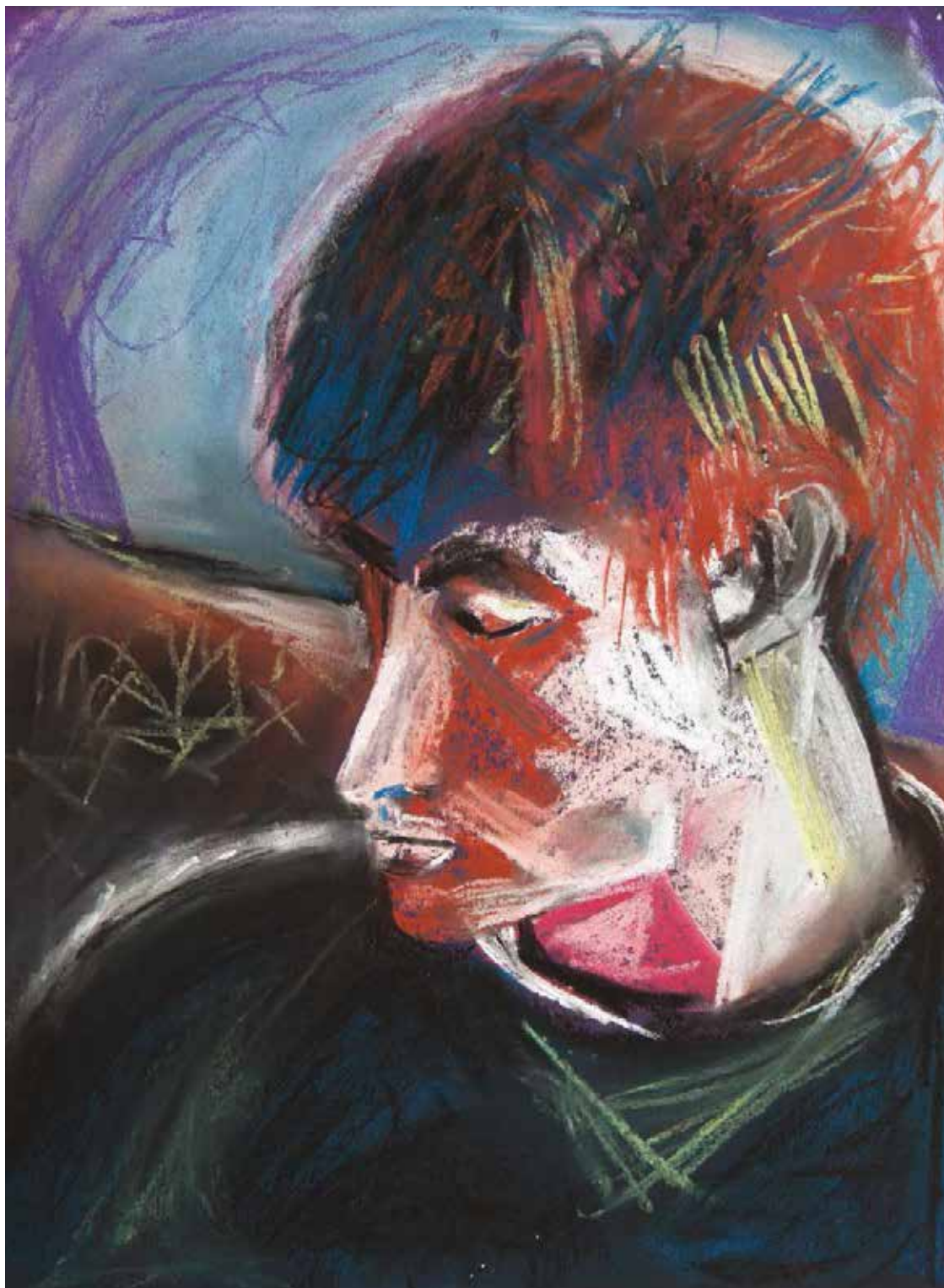


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